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MORAL AND LITERARY
DISSERTATIONS,

ON THE
FOLLOWING SUBJECTS;

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. On <i>Truth</i> and <i>Faithfulness</i> . | 5. On a <i>Taste</i> for the <i>Fine Arts</i> . |
| 2. On <i>Habit</i> and <i>Association</i> . | 6. On the <i>Alliance</i> of <i>Natural History</i> , and <i>Philosophy</i> , with <i>Poetry</i> . |
| 3. On <i>Inconsistency</i> of <i>Expectation</i> in <i>Literary Pursuits</i> . | |
| 4. On a <i>Taste</i> for the general <i>Beauties</i> of <i>Nature</i> . | |

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF
CHARLES DE POLIER, ESQ.
AND AN
APPENDIX.

BY
THOMAS PERCIVAL, M.D. F.R.S. & S.A.
MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETIES
OF LONDON AND EDINBURGH,
AND OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF PHYSICIANS
AT PARIS, &c. &c.

WARRINGTON,
Printed by W. EYRES, for J. JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-Yard,
LONDON.

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T O

THE RIGHT REVEREND

RICHARD WATSON,

D. D. F. R. S.

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF;

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

THE approbation, with
which your lordship has
been pleased to honour the first
part of the Work, now offered
to your acceptance, encourages
me to hope that you will receive
the subsequent Dissertations,
with the same friendly and
A 3 candid

6 DEDICATION.

candid indulgence. And I am happy in the present opportunity, of publicly expressing the respect, esteem, and attachment with which I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

much obliged,

and most faithful

humble Servant,

THOMAS PERCIVAL.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the public a miscellaneous work, like the following, it may be proper to give a brief account of the different parts, of which it is composed. The SOCRATIC DISCOURSE was written several years ago, for the use of the author's own family; and a few printed copies of it were distributed amongst his friends. The approbation with which it has been honoured, by some of the most judicious of them, has abated his diffidence concerning it; and the desire of rendering his private labours of utility to

A 4

mankind,

mankind, has induced him to commit it again to the press. It forms the first part of a plan, which he has long had in contemplation, of teaching his older children the most important branches of ethics, viz. VERACITY, FAITHFULNESS, JUSTICE, and BENEVOLENCE, in a *systematic* and *experimental* manner, by EXAMPLES. But various causes have hitherto prevented, and will probably continue to prevent, the completion of his design. He cordially wishes, therefore, that some moralist, of more leisure and superior abilities, into whose hands this little piece may fall, would execute, in its full extent, what is here so partially and imperfectly attempted.

To promote the love of truth, and to excite an aversion to duplicity and
falshood;

falsehood, are objects which merit the most serious attention, in the business of education. And as the minds of children, at an early age, are incapable of discerning the distinctions and subordinations of moral duty, the rules, prescribed to them, should be absolute and without exception. But in the more advanced period of youth, observation and reading will necessarily point out many deviations from these rules, not only in the conversation and conduct of their friends, but in the most applauded actions which history records. And when such reflections suggest themselves, it is a proof that the powers of the understanding are unfolded; and that it will be reasonable to graft rational knowledge on the love of virtue. For to obviate error, is the first step towards rectitude; and the abuse of reason, in our moral

moral

moral judgments, too frequently terminates in depravity of principle.

The author has, in general, given his authorities for the facts, which he has related, that historic truth may be distinguished from the fictions, introduced for the sake of illustration : But in the story of the king of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France, they have been unavoidably intermingled. The reference to Sully's Memoirs will, however, shew were the former ends, and the latter commences.

It is well known to the learned, that Socrates gave rise to a new mode of instruction, in the schools of philosophy ; and that Plato and Xenophon, by recording the moral conversations of their amiable master, excited a taste for dialogue, which
has

has prevailed through all succeeding ages. The mode of exemplification, pursued in the present work, has necessarily occasioned some deviation from each of these great originals; who are, indeed, themselves so different, as to agree only in one common outline. But he has copied both in many particulars; especially in the adoption of real characters, for the *dramatis personæ*, or speakers in his discourse. How far he has done justice to the talents or opinions of Philocles, it is not for him to determine. But if the sentiments, imputed to his late honoured friend, be such as he would not have avowed; let it be remembered, that Plato also wrote what Socrates disclaimed; * and that the author alone

is

* The *LYSIS*. When Socrates heard this dialogue of Plato read, in which he supported the

the

is answerable for whatever he has delivered.

The ESSAYS on the INFLUENCE of HABIT and ASSOCIATION ; on INCONSISTENCY of EXPECTATION in LITERARY PURSUITS ; on the ADVANTAGES of a TASTE for the GENERAL BEAUTIES of NATURE and of ART ; and on the ALLIANCE of NATURAL HISTORY and PHILOSOPHY with POETRY, have been read before the LITERARY and PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, of Manchester, and honoured with a place in their journals. But in these several compositions, the discerning reader will perceive evident traits of paternal instruction : And that both

the principal character, “ Gods ! ” he exclaimed, “ how this young man makes me say what I “ never thought ! ”

in

in the choice of the subjects, and in the experimental method of discussing them, he has had in view, the interests of those, in whose improvement he is most nearly and tenderly concerned. They will therefore, he trusts, be deemed no improper sequel to the SOCRATIC DISCOURSE.

The composition of a TRIBUTE to the MEMORY of CHARLES DE POLIER, ESQ. devolved upon him, as the friend of the deceased, and officially as president of the very respectable society, which appointed this record of his merit. It was written under the impression of heart-felt sorrow; and on that account may, perhaps, be suspected of exhibiting a picture, too strong in its lineaments, and too glowing in its colours. But time, which calms every emotion,
and

and restores the due authority of judgment over imagination, has made no change in the author's sentiments, concerning the character he has drawn. And the insertion of it, in this work, whilst it gratifies the feelings of his mind, is perfectly consonant to the general design, which he has in view. For it offers a most instructive model to young men, who are animated with the laudable ambition of uniting liberal and polite manners, with the more solid attainments of learning and virtue.

The APPENDIX to the SOCRATIC DISCOURSE contains such remarks and illustrations, as further reflection or reading have suggested, since that piece was written. The author is fully apprized of the peculiar delicacy and difficulty of the moral topics, which

which he has attempted to investigate ; and trusts, that he shall always be disposed to acknowledge and to rectify any errors, into which he may have fallen. For he deems a return to truth and reason, more honourable than the possession even of infallible judgment ; and sincerely adopts the sentiment of a celebrated writer ; “ that the man, who is free
“ from mistakes, can pretend to no
“ praise, except what is derived from
“ the justness of his understanding ;
“ but that he, who corrects his mis-
“ takes, displays at once, the justness
“ of his understanding, and the can-
“ dour of his heart.”

MANCHESTER, *September 1, 1785.*

E R R A T A.

Page 62, line 15,		for Shakespear,	<i>read</i> Shakespeare.
92,	6,	authorifed,	<i>read</i> authorized.
98,	7,	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>
100,	13,	apologifed,	<i>read</i> apologized.
107,	14,	philosophifing,	<i>read</i> philosophizing.
110,	18,	Chimæras,	<i>read</i> Chimeras.
145,	Note,	Shakespear's,	<i>read</i> Shakespeare's.
147,	3,	characterifed,	<i>read</i> characterized.
209,	23,	humanifes,	<i>read</i> humanizes.
212,	14,	civilifed,	<i>read</i> civilized.
248,	8,	lightenings,	<i>read</i> lightnings.
—	19,	<i>id.</i>	<i>id.</i>
249,	3,	Shakespear,	<i>read</i> Shakespeare.
319,	16,	authorifed,	<i>read</i> authorized.

N. B. The Author having fuppreffed feveral fections, intended for infertion in the Appendix, the references in the Socratic Difcourfe, to pages 19, 20, 53, 76, 85, 102, 108, are confequently erroneous.

T A B L E

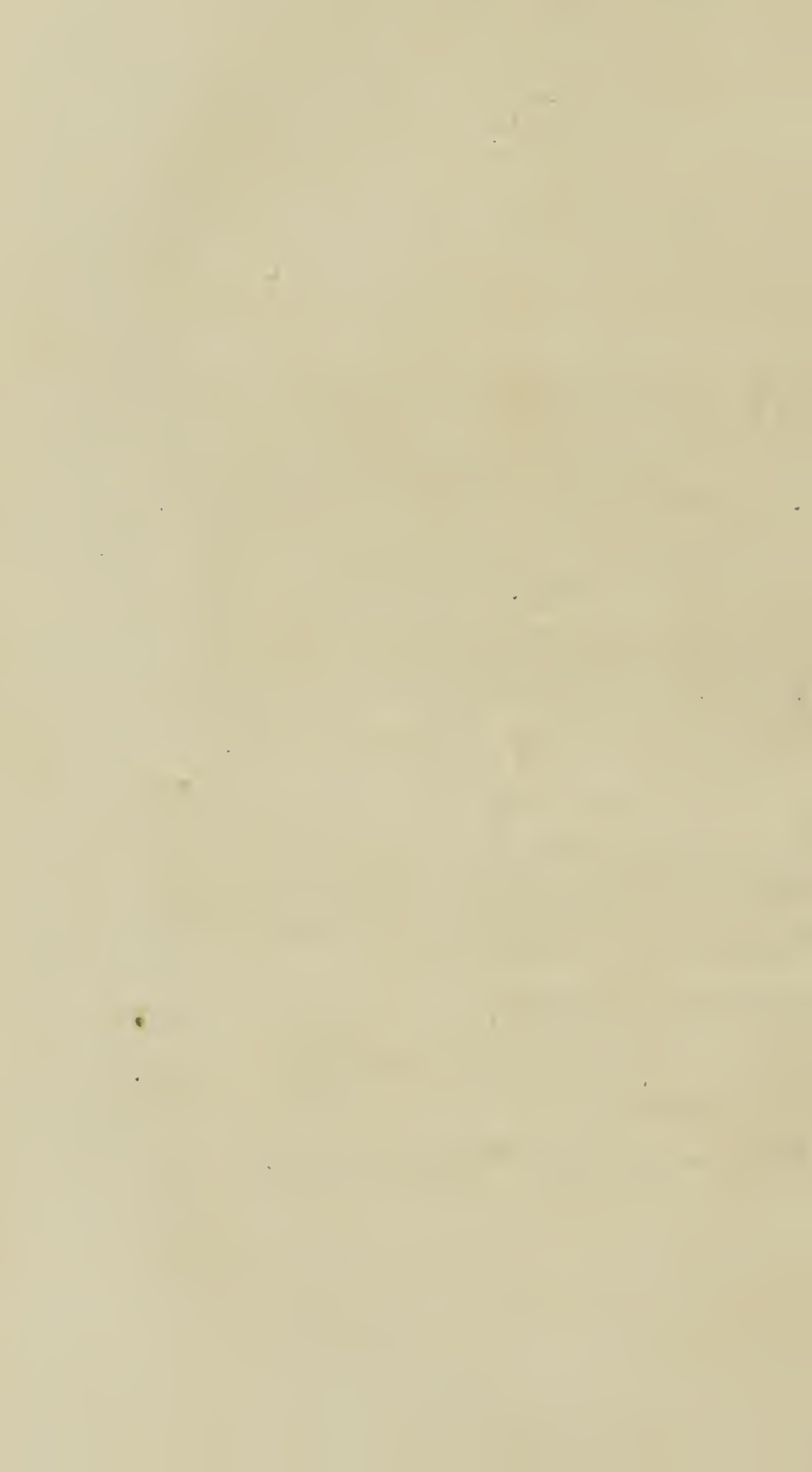
O F

C O N T E N T S.

	Page
<i>SOCRATIC Discourse on Truth.</i> -	I
<i>On the Influence of Habit and Association.</i>	117
<i>On Inconsistency of Expectation in Literary Pursuits.</i> - - -	185
<i>On a Taste for the Beauties of Nature.</i> -	201
<i>On a Taste for the Fine Arts.</i> - -	211
<i>On the Alliance of Natural History with Poetry.</i>	223
<i>A Tribute to the Memory of Charles de Polier, Esq.</i> - - - -	275

A P P E N D I X.

<i>On true and false Honour.</i> - -	291
<i>On false Maxims of Morality.</i> - -	298
<i>On Fealty to Magistrates.</i> - -	302
<i>On false Opinions concerning Friendship.</i> -	308
<i>On Disputation.</i> - - -	309
<i>On the indiscriminate Pleadings of Lawyers.</i>	329



B O O K S

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A

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE

O N

T R U T H.

INTER SILVAS ACADEMI QUÆRERE
VERUM.

HOR.

A

S O C R A T I C D I S C O U R S E

O N

T R U T H.

T O

T. B. P.

YOU have often been a witness, my dear Son, of the pleasure experienced by me, in the recollection of the Academical years, which I passed at ——— in the pursuit of general science, before I engaged in my professional studies at the university of ———. And you have no less frequently heard me express the highest

veneration for the profound learning, and exalted character of Philocles, under whose tuition, the charms of knowledge first attracted my regard. I have lately revisited those scenes so delightful to my youth: But, leaving to your conception the emotions which I felt, I shall relate to you a SOCRATIC CONVERSATION, that occurred there in my presence, between Philocles and your kinsman Sophron. This amiable youth, who is likely to reflect a lustre on the sacred office, to which, I trust, he will ere long be called, had been reciting to his Professor an Academical composition on the importance of TRUTH, and on the folly, infamy, and baseness of LYING and DECEIT. And, when he laid down the book, Philocles expressed an earnest wish, that such sentiments might ever influence the heart, and direct the conduct of his pupil. But general rules, continued he, are insufficient for our government in the diversified and complicated occurrences
of

of life : And, if we be ambitious of acting with wisdom, honour, and virtue, it is necessary that we should make ourselves acquainted with the various branches and subordinations of each moral duty. Let us, therefore, take a particular view of TRUTH, and of her inseparable companion FAITHFULNESS. You are no novice in these subjects ; and Euphronius, I am persuaded, will be pleased to hear you exercised in the discussion of them.

I presume you will concur with me in opinion, that MORAL TRUTH is the *conformity of our expressions to our thoughts* ; and FAITHFULNESS, *that of our actions to our expressions* : And that LYING OR FALSHOOD is generally a mean, selfish, or malevolent, and always an unjustifiable endeavour to deceive another, by signifying or asserting that to be truth or fact, which is known or believed to be otherwise ; and by making promises, without any intention to perform them.

But, if we believe our assertions or signs to be true, and they should afterwards prove to be false, tell me, Sophron, are we then guilty of Lying?

No, replied Sophron; we shall have committed only an error or mistake: For under such circumstances, we must have been deceived ourselves; and could have had no design of imposing upon others.

But is every breach of promise a Lie, continued Philocles?

I should think not, answered Sophron, if the promise were made with sincerity, and the violation of it be unavoidable.

Your distinction is just, said Philocles; and there are also certain conditions, obvious to the general sense of mankind, understood or implied in almost every promise, on which the performance must depend. Whang-to, Emperor of China,
who

who governed his people like a father, and regarded his own elevation and power as trusts delegated for their good, had a daughter who was his only child, and the darling of his old age. He promised her in marriage to Oufan-quey, the son of his favourite mandarine, and that he would bequeath to him all his dominions as her dowry. Oufan-quey was at that time a youth of the most promising abilities and dispositions ; but the prospect of royalty, and the adulation of a court, soon corrupted his heart. He became haughty, insolent, and cruel ; and the people anticipated, with horror, the tyranny which they must endure under his government. By the institutions of the Chinese, the great officers of state may remonstrate to the emperor, when his decrees are injurious to the public interest ; and this privilege has often tended to abate the rigour of despotism. Whang-to heard, with grief and astonishment, the complaints

of his mandarines againſt Oufan-quey. He ſummoned him into his preſence, and being ſatisfied with the proofs of his demerit, he addreſſed the officers of ſtate in the following terms: “ I engaged
 “ my daughter in marriage, and pro-
 “ miſed the inheritance of my dominions
 “ to Oufan-quey, a youth who was wiſe,
 “ humane, and juſt. In departing from
 “ virtue, he has cancelled theſe obliga-
 “ tions, and forfeited his title to both.”
 Then turning to Oufan-quey, he ſaid,
 “ I command you to retire from my
 “ court, and to paſs the remainder of
 “ your days in the moſt diſtant province
 “ of my empire.”

But is it not deemed peculiarly honourable, Sophron, to perform a promiſe, when paſſion or ſelf-intereſt ſtrongly incites us to the violation of it?

Nothing raiſes our admiration higher, ſaid Sophron; and I beg leave to relate

to you a story, which places this truth in a very striking point of view. A Spanish cavalier, without any reasonable provocation, assassinated a Moorish gentleman, and instantly fled from justice. He was vigorously pursued; but availing himself of a sudden turn in the road, he leaped, unperceived, over a garden wall. The proprietor, who was also a Moor, happened to be, at that time, walking in the garden; and the Spaniard fell upon his knees before him, acquainted him with his case, and in the most pathetic manner, implored concealment. The Moor listened to him with compassion, and generously promised his assistance. He then locked him in a summer-house, and left him, with an assurance that, when night approached, he would provide for his escape. A few hours afterwards, the dead body of his son was brought to him; and the description of the murderer exactly agreed with the appearance of
the

the Spaniard, whom he had then in custody. He concealed the horror and suspicion which he felt; and retiring to his chamber, remained there till midnight. Then, going privately into the garden, he opened the door of the summer-house, and thus accosted the cavalier: “Christian,” said he, “the youth
“whom you have murdered was my
“only son. Your crime merits the severest punishment. But I have solemnly pledged my word for your
“security; and I disdain to violate even
“a rash engagement with a cruel enemy.” He conducted the Spaniard to the stables, and furnishing him with one of his swiftest mules, “Fly,” said he, “whilst the darkness of the night conceals you. Your hands are polluted
“with blood; but GOD is just; and I
“humbly thank him that my faith is
“unspotted, and that I have resigned
“judgment unto him.”*

* See Histor. Mirror.

When Sophron had finished this narrative, I took the liberty of observing that Faithfulness is a virtue, which we sometimes meet with in very abandoned characters, who are neither influenced by a sense of religious, nor of moral obligation. In such persons it is founded on certain ideas of HONOUR, which originally spring from the best natural principles.* After the battle of Culloden, in the year 1745, a reward of thirty thousand pounds was offered to any one, who should discover or deliver up the young Pretender. He had taken refuge with the Kennedies, two common thieves; who protected him with fidelity; robbed for his support; and often went in disguise to Inverness, to buy provisions for him. A considerable time afterwards, one of these men, who had resisted the temptation of thirty thousand pounds, was hanged for stealing a cow, of the value of thirty shillings. †

* Vid. Appendix, Sect. I. † See Pennant's Tour in Scotland.

But I apprehend, resumed Sophron, with much modesty, that there are cases in which it would be more culpable to fulfil, than to violate a promise.

To this proposition Philocles gave his full assent, and illustrated it by the following supposititious case. A brace of loaded pistols have been left in my hands by a friend, to whom I have engaged to restore them, whenever he shall make the demand. But if he claim them when intoxicated with liquor, or mad with passion and resentment, it is evident that the performance of my promise would not only be weak, but extremely reprehensible: And my friend himself, in his calm and sober moments, would be amongst the first to charge me with all the mischiefs, occasioned by my erroneous sense of duty. Hasty declarations and rash asseverations are sometimes made by good men, who cannot however reasonably or conscientiously

tiouſly fulfil them. When Jeſus had waſhed the feet of ſeveral of his diſciples, he came to Simon Peter: “ *And Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? Jeſus answered and ſaid, What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet! Jeſus answered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head.*”* Nor can even vows, however ſolemn, be binding, when the object of them is the commiſſion of a crime. For though appeals to the Deity are ſacred pledges of our ſincerity, they make no change in the nature or legality of actions. And it would be the groſſeſt ſuperſtition to ſuppoſe, that the violation of God’s ordinances can either be honourable, or acceptable to him.† David, in revenge for an iſult offered him

* JOHN, Chap. xiii.

† See Appendix, Sect II.

by Nabal, vowed that he would put to the sword every male of his family. But his wrath was afterwards appeased; and he became so sensible of the injustice of his design, that he said, “*Blessed*
 “*be the LORD, who has kept his servant*
 “*from evil.*”*

It should seem, that the Roman emperor Trajan thought it might be criminal in his officers, under certain circumstances, to maintain the allegiance which they had sworn to him. † On the appointment of Suberanus to be captain of the royal guard, he presented him with a sword, as the badge of his fealty, saying, “Let this be drawn in
 “my defence, if I rule according to
 “equity; but if otherwise, it may be
 “employed against me.” ‡

* 1 Sam. xxv. 22.

† See Appendix, Sect. III.

‡ Plin.

The conclusion concerning the observance of promises, may be extended to Veracity, notwithstanding the extravagant declaration of one of the Fathers, “that he would not violate truth, though he were sure to gain heaven by it.” Whenever, from the concurrence of extraordinary circumstances, the practice of one virtue is rendered incompatible with the performance of another, of much higher obligation, it is evident that the inferior must yield to the superior duty. An example will elucidate, and evince the justness of this observation.

After the horrid massacre of the Huguenots in France, which began on St. Bartholomew's day, 1572, the king of Navarre was very rigorously guarded, by the order of the queen-mother, Catharine de Medicis. But one day, when he was hunting near Senlis, during the heat of the chace, he seized a favourable opportunity

opportunity of making his escape ; and galloping through the woods, with a few faithful friends, amongst whom was young Rosny, afterwards duke of Sully, he crossed the Seine at Poissy,* and fled to the castle of a nobleman, who was a zealous, though secret protestant, and strongly attached to his interest. Troops of horse were soon dispatched, different ways, in pursuit of him. One of these detachments stopped at the gates of the castle, where Henry was then refreshing himself ; and the captain demanded permission to search for him, shewing the royal mandate to bring the head of Henry, and to put his attendants to the sword. Resistance was evidently vain ; and compliance would have been a breach of hospitality, friendship, and humanity ; at the same time that it must have proved fatal to the interests of the reformed religion, and to the whole body of protestants

* See Sully's Memoirs ; and also the Preface to this work.

in France, who had no other protector but the king of Navarre. The nobleman, therefore, without hesitation, and with an undaunted countenance, instantly said, “Waste not your time, Sir, “in fruitless searches. The king of “Navarre, with his friends, passed this “way about two hours ago; and if you “set spurs to your horse, you will over- “take him before the night approaches.” The captain and his troop, satisfied with this answer, rode off at full speed; and the king was then left at liberty to provide for his safety, by disguising himself, and taking a different rout.

Under such circumstances, as you have described, all mankind, observed Sophron, would condemn a strict adherence to TRUTH.* But what do you think

* *Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui*

Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam.

Hor. Ep. VI. Lib. I. V. 15.

think of the conduct of the Portuguese slave, whose breach of veracity, and even perjury, is extolled by Abbé Raynal, in his History of the European Settlements. This negro, who had fled into the woods to enjoy the liberty which was his natural right, having learned that his old master was arrested, and likely to be condemned for a capital

That which being done admits of a rational justification, is the essence, or general character, of a MORAL DUTY. DIALOGUE CONCERNING HAPPINESS, by JAMES HARRIS, Esq. p. 175.

The right to truth may be forfeited in particular cases, as by one who hath formed a design to kill another, and, if not hindered, will probably accomplish his wicked purpose. Neither the person whose life is aimed at, should he save himself by a lie, nor any one who should tell an officious lie for him, will be guilty of the least injustice to him, whom, by this means, they keep from perpetrating the mischief intended. Instead of a wrong, it is a kindness. GROVE'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. p. 415.

Adhering to the *ordinary* rules of duty, in these *extraordinary* cases, may sometimes occasion greater evils to our country, or to mankind, than all the virtues, any one mortal can exert, will repair. HUTCHESON'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. 4to. p. 117. See a farther discussion of this subject, in the Appendix Sect IV. Consult also Genesis, Chap. xii.

crime,

crime, came into the court of justice; assumed the guilt of the fact; suffered himself to be imprisoned; brought false, though judicial proofs of his crime; and was executed instead of his beloved master.

The disapprobation of falshood, in this instance, answered Philocles, is suppressed for a while, by our admiration of the affection, gratitude, generosity, and greatness of mind displayed by the negro. We lament the bondage of such a hero; and regret that his exalted virtues were not displayed on a more important and honourable occasion. But when these first emotions are over, and we dispassionately reflect on the conduct of the slave, we must condemn it as an unjustifiable sacrifice of truth, of his own life, and of the duty which he owed to society.* The divine command, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness AGAINST thy*

* See Appendix, Sect. V.

“*neighbour,*” cannot surely be supposed to imply, that he may bear *false witness in his FAVOUR*; because this would be to forbid private injury, and to authorize public wrongs. Judicial testimony, in the present circumstances of the moral world, is essential to the well-being of society; and to lessen the general credibility of it, by introducing into courts of law falsehood and perjury, is a high crime against the state, and severely punished in all countries which have emerged from barbarism.* Besides, the good of the community requires that justice should be executed on the offender himself, to prevent him from committing other crimes: And it would give encouragement to vice, if an innocent person, perhaps tired of life, or influenced by enthusiastic notions of honour, friendship, or love, might suffer for another who is guilty.

* See Appendix, Sect. VI.

The certainty of punishment, even in misdemeanors, is strongly urged by the Marquis de Beccaria, the great advocate for judicial lenity. And he thinks the forgiveness of the injured party himself, should not interrupt the execution of justice. “ This may be an act of good-
“ nature and humanity,” he observes,
“ but it is contrary to the good of the
“ public. For although a private citi-
“ zen may dispense with satisfaction for
“ his private injury, he cannot remove
“ the necessity of public example. The
“ right of punishing belongs not to any
“ individual in particular, but to the
“ society in general, or the sovereign
“ who represents that society : And a
“ man may renounce his own portion of
“ this right, but he cannot give up that
“ of others.”

The conduct of the negro, said Sophron, however erroneous it might be in point of wisdom, or unjustifiable with

respect to its morality, was perfectly generous and disinterested. But the same elegant writer, who records this fact, has related another example of the violation of truth, from motives purely *selfish*, which I cannot condemn, though I know not how to justify. I will endeavour to recollect, and to repeat the story. A British serjeant was taken prisoner by the savages in America; who prepared themselves to put him to death, with all the barbarity which their skill in torture could invent. Shocked with the view of the horrid sufferings which awaited him, he thus addressed the Indians: “Mighty
“ warriors, your preparations are vain,
“ for my body is invulnerable; and if
“ you will set me at liberty, I will teach
“ you how to become so. Think not
“ that I impose upon you by false pre-
“ tensions. I am willing that you should
“ try upon me an experiment, which
“ may satisfy your doubts. Let the chief,
“ who

“ who holds my hanger, now strike with
“ all his force. I equally defy the sharp-
“ nefs of the instrument, and the ftrength
“ of his arm.” Whilst he was faying
theſe words, he bent his head, and laid
bare his neck. The Indian eagerly ad-
vanced; and by one furious blow, fevered
the head from the body. Thus the poor
ferjeant, by his prefence of mind, ex-
changed lingering tortures for an eaſy
and instantaneous death.

Euphronius here remarked, that the
ſtory is of doubtful authority, by the
confefſion of the Abbé himſelf. But ad-
mitting the truth of it, continued he, for
the ſake of argument, what moralift can
be ſo rigid as not to deem the conduct
of the ſerjeant at leaſt excuſable? Per-
haps no man, in ſimilar circumſtances,
would have acted differently, if he poſ-
ſeſſed ſufficient compoſure to deviſe, or
addreſs to praſtiſe ſuch an expedient.
The caſe is not analogous to that of
C 4 martyr-

martyrdom for religion. The horrid sufferings to be endured, in this instance, could answer no good end ; and society received not the least injury, either immediate or remote, by the evasion of them.

Recollecting an historical fact of unquestionable truth, and strictly applicable to the point in debate, I requested permission to relate it. When Columbus and his crew were cast away on an island, more than thirty leagues from Hispaniola, nothing remained to them in prospect, but to end their miserable days with naked savages, far from their country and their friends. To add to these calamities, the natives began soon to murmur at the residence of the Spaniards amongst them ; the support of whom became burthensome to men, ignorant of agriculture, and unaccustomed to exertion or industry : They brought in provisions with reluctance, furnished them sparingly, and

and even threatened entirely to withhold them. Such a resolution must have occasioned inevitable destruction to the Spaniards ; but Columbus prevented it by a happy device, that revived all the admiration and reverence, with which the Indians first regarded these strangers. By his skill in astronomy, he knew there was shortly to be a total eclipse of the moon. On the day before it happened, he assembled the principal persons of the district, and after reproaching them for their defection from those, whom they had lately revered, he told them that the Spaniards were servants of the Great Spirit, who dwells in heaven : That, offended at their refusal to support the objects of his peculiar favour, the Deity was preparing to punish their crime with exemplary severity ; and that the moon should be darkened that very night, and assume a bloody hue, as a sign of the Divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall on them. To
this

this marvellous prediction, some of the barbarians listened with careless indifference; others, with credulous astonishment: But when the moon began gradually to withdraw her light, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were struck with terror. They ran with consternation to their houses, and returning to Columbus loaded with provisions, threw them instantly at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit, to avert the destruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, seeming to be moved by their intreaties, promised to comply with their desire. The eclipse went off, the moon recovered its splendour; and from that time, the Spaniards were not only furnished profusely with provisions, but treated with the most superstitious attention.* This solemn deceit of Columbus may be justified by the rights of necessity. Shipwrecked on a distant coast, in the profe-

* See Robertson's Hist. of America, Vol. I. Book 2.

cution of an enterprize, which, in his mind, appears to have originated from honourable and useful views, and destitute of every means of supplying himself and his associates with sustenance, he had a claim to the protection, assistance, and support of the people who were spectators of his calamity. And it was a happy fertility of genius, which suggested to him an expedient, far preferable to the force of arms. But I feel a secret wish, that this truly great man had mixed less of falsity with his artifice. He might have reprehended the Indians for their want of hospitality, alarmed their fears by his prediction, and excited their wonder and reverence by its fulfilment, without denouncing, in such unguarded terms, the immediate vengeance of Heaven. Truth is so important, and of so delicate a nature, that every possible precaution should be employed to extenuate its violation, although the sacrifice be made to duties which supersede its obligation.

Philocles very obligingly thanked me for recalling to his memory so pertinent a fact. He then turned to his pupil, and asked him what he thought of the maxim, which some persons have adopted, “ that
 “ faith is not to be kept with rogues
 “ or traitors ? ”

I think the maxim, replied Sophron, false in itself, and highly injurious to society. For, independent of the licentiousness and cruelty, to which it might give rise, a man owes to his own honour and peace of mind, except on very extraordinary occasions, the strict performance of his promise. And this opinion seems to have influenced the conduct of the great Viscount Turenne, and of Sir Richard Herbert. The former was attacked one night by robbers near Paris, who stripped him of his money, watch, and rings. He engaged to give them a hundred *louis d'ors*, if they would return him a ring, of little intrinsic worth,
 but

but on which he set a particular value. The highwaymen complied; and one of them had the boldness to go to his house the succeeding day, and in the midst of a large company to demand, in a whisper, the performance of his promise. The Viscount gave orders for the money to be paid; and suffered the villain to escape, before he related the adventure.*

Sir Richard Herbert, being sent by Edward the Fourth, to reduce certain rebels in North Wales, laid siege to Harlech castle, in Merionethshire; a fortress so strong, that he despaired of taking it but by blockade and famine. The captain of it offered to surrender, on condition that Sir Richard *would do what he could to save his life*. The condition was accepted; and Sir Richard brought the commander to the king, requesting his majesty to grant him a pardon, as the expectation of this favour

* See Ramsay's Life of Turenne.

had induced him to yield up an important castle, which he might have defended. Edward replied to Sir Richard Herbert, “ That as he had no power, “ by his commission, to pardon any one, “ he might therefore, after the representation hereof to his sovereign, deliver him up to justice.” Sir Richard Herbert answered, “ He had not yet “ done *the best he could for him*; and “ therefore most humbly desired his “ highness to do one of two things; “ either to put him again in the castle “ where he had been, and command “ some other to take him out; or, if “ his highness would not do so, to take “ his life for the captain’s, that being “ the last proof he could give, that he “ had used his utmost endeavour to “ fulfil his promise.” The king, finding himself so much urged, pardoned the captain, but bestowed on Sir Richard Herbert no other reward for his service.*

* See the Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

These gentlemen, said Philocles, displayed a delicate sense of honour; and, though I am dubious, whether the conduct of Monsieur Turenne has the sanction of the great Roman casuist,* yet, according to my judgment, both he and Sir Richard Herbert acted conformably to the laws of reason and rectitude. For every *lawful* promise, made by one possessing presence of mind, and the free use of reason, no event or consideration succeeding, which an unbiaſſed understanding would deem sufficient to render it *unlawful*, ought to be religiously observed.† But promises, extorted by fear, and that clearly contravene our duty to society, are void in themselves: Thus an engagement made with sincerity, under the strong impressions of terror, to a highwayman or murderer,

* *Si prædonibus pactum pro capite pretium non attuleris, nulla fraus est, ne si juratus quidem id non feceris.* Cic. de Off. Lib. III. Cap. 29.

† See Grove's Mor. Philosophy.

not to bear testimony against him, can be of no validity; because there subsists an antecedent claim of the community, which cannot be dispensed with by any of its members. I have supposed the engagement to be sincere; for, if entered into with a previous design of violation, a breach of truth and faithfulness is in some degree committed, notwithstanding its injustice or illegality.

But when you deliver to another as a certain truth, what you believe to be false, are you guilty of lying, should it afterwards prove to be true?

Yes, answered Sophron; because my intention is to deceive, and to make a supposed falshood pass for truth. Chian-fu was an officer in the guards of the emperor of Japan. He had formed a tender connection with one of the ladies of the court, and was on the point of marriage, when a formidable infurrection,

infurrection, in a distant island of the empire, occasioned by the tyranny and cruel exactions of the government, obliged him to leave the capital without delay, to assume his post in the royal army. The war was protracted through various causes; and he bore with great impatience so long an absence from his mistress. By the influence of a bribe, he obtained permission from the commander in chief to return to Jeddo, for a few weeks; during which time he hoped to celebrate his nuptials. But dreading lest the emperor should resent his desertion of the army, at so critical a conjuncture, he pretended that he brought tidings, from the general, of an important advantage, gained over the enemy; which was likely soon to be succeeded by a complete victory. These accounts were founded on probability, not on truth. His falsehoods, however, procured him the most favourable reception at court. He married the lady; and

after a week spent in festivity, prepared for his departure to join the army. An express at this time arrived, with the news of the entire defeat of the insurgents; but no mention was made of any previous dispatches by Chian-fu. The emperor suspected that he had been guilty of deceit. He was strictly examined; confessed his crime, and the motives of it; and was condemned to suffer immediate death. For lying is a capital offence, by the laws of Japan.

If truth, resumed Philocles, be an agreement between our words and thoughts, are you under an obligation to express all your thoughts?

No, said Sophron, prudence often forbids it; and it is no violation of truth to conceal those thoughts, or that knowledge, with which another has no right to be acquainted. On a particular occasion, the Jews demanded of Jesus,

Jefus, “ *What sign fheweft thou unto us ?*
 “ *Jefus answered and faid, Destroy this tem-*
 “ *ple, and in three days I will raife it up.*
 “ *Then faid the Jews, Forty and fix years*
 “ *was this temple in building, and wilt thou*
 “ *rear it up in three days ? But he fpake of*
 “ *the temple of his body. When therefore he*
 “ *was arifen from the dead, his difciples*
 “ *remembered that he had faid this unto*
 “ *them.*” *

Sometimes, when improper or treacherous questions are asked, filence would be no lefs dangerous, than an explicit declaration of our sentiments. In thefe cafes, we fhall be juftified in the ufe of fuch evafions, as do not contradict the truth. When the chief priefts and fcribes inquired of our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay tribute unto Cæfar ? “ *He perceived their crafti-*
 “ *ness, and faid unto them, Why tempt ye*
 “ *me ? Shew me a penny : Whofe image*

* John, Chap. ii. Ver. 18.

“ and superscription hath it? They answered
 “ and said, Cæsar’s. And he said unto them,
 “ Render unto Cæsar the things which be
 “ Cæsar’s, and unto GOD the things which
 “ be GOD’s. And they could not take hold
 “ of his words before the people: And they
 “ marvelled at his answers, and held their
 “ peace.”

Under the reign of the cruel and bigoted queen Mary, the princess Elizabeth, her sister, suffered a variety of persecutions, on account of her steady attachment to the protestant religion. It is said, she was one day interrogated concerning the Lord’s Supper; and that she returned the following prudent, and evasive answer:

“ Christ was the word that spake it;
 “ He took the bread and brake it;
 “ And what the word did make it,
 “ That I believe and take it.” *

* Walpole’s Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

Philocles expressed much satisfaction in the judicious distinction, which his pupil had made, and observed, that the conduct of the princess Elizabeth is fully justified by the example of the apostle Paul, in circumstances not very dissimilar. The Athenians had a law, which rendered it capital to promulgate any new divinities.* And when Paul preached to them JESUS and the RESURRECTION, he was accused of having broken this law, and of being a “*setter forth of strange Gods* ;” and was carried before the Areopagus, a court of judicature, which took cognisance of all criminal matters, and was, in a particular manner, charged with the care of the established religion. An impostor, in such a situation, would have retracted his doctrine to save his life ; and an enthusiast would have sacrificed his life, without attempting to save it by innocent means. But the Apostle wisely avoided

* Socrates suffered under this law.

both extremes; and availing himself of an inscription “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD,” which he had seen upon an altar in the city, he pleaded in his own defence, “*Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*” By this presence of mind, he evaded the law, and escaped condemnation, without departing from the truth of the Gospel, or violating the honour of God.*

Though I am no general admirer, continued Philocles, of the maxims of morality delivered by Lord Chesterfield, yet I think his remarks on the present subject peculiarly worthy of attention. “The prudence and necessity,” says the noble author, “of frequently concealing
“the truth, insensibly seduces people to
“violate it. It is the only art of mean
“capacities, and the only refuge of mean
“spirits. Whereas concealing the truth,

* Vid. Acts xvii. 23. Also Lord Lyttelton’s Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul.

“ upon proper occasions, is as prudent
“ and as innocent, as telling a lie, upon
“ any occasion, is infamous and foolish.
“ I will state you a case in your own
“ department. Suppose you are em-
“ ployed at a foreign court, and that
“ the minister of that court is absurd or
“ impertinent enough to ask you, what
“ your instructions are; will you tell
“ him a lie, which as soon as found out,
“ and found out it certainly will be,
“ must destroy your credit, blast your
“ character, and render you useless there?
“ No. Will you tell him the truth then,
“ and betray your trust? As certainly,
“ No. But you will answer, with firm-
“ ness, That you are surpris'd at such
“ a question; that you are persuas'd he
“ does not expect an answer to it; but
“ that at all events he certainly will not
“ have one. Such an answer will give
“ him confidence in you; he will con-
“ ceive an opinion of your veracity, of
“ which opinion you may afterwards
“ make very honest and fair advantages.”

Philocles proceeded to interrogate his pupil, whether falſity, when in jeſt, is to be deemed a lie? But Sophron declined the queſtion, as too nice for his deciſion; and deſired to hear the ſentiments of Philocles, who delivered them in the following terms. Wit and irony, raillery and humour, are often deviations from the ſtrict rules of veracity: But they are allowed by common conſent; and, under proper reſtrictions, they contribute to enliven converſation, and to improve our manners. But jocularity is certainly culpable, and may be deemed a ſpecies of lying, when it is intended to deceive, without any good end in view; and eſpecially with the ungenerous one of diverting ourſelves at the painful expence of another. The practice alſo may lead to more criminal falſhoods; and it is related with honour of Ariſtides, that he held truth to be ſo ſacred, *ut ne joco quidem mentiretur.*

Some jocular lies have produced the most serious and affecting consequences ; of which I will give you an example or two, in the youthful frolics of Hilario, a nobleman who now looks back, with sorrow and regret, on the sufferings occasioned by his levity. When he was a student at Cambridge, he went at midnight crying *fire, fire!* to the chamber door of one of the fellows of ———, a gentleman universally admired for his literary and poetical abilities, but who was of a timid and melancholy disposition. The gentleman awaked out of a sound sleep, and, attentive only to the first suggestions of fear, leaped through the window, at the hazard of losing his life by the fall. Not long after this transaction, Hilario went up to London ; and dining in a mixed company of persons of fashion, he happened to sit near a grave old gentleman, who took the first opportunity of making particular inquiries concerning a youth, then at Cambridge,

Cambridge, whom he knew to be intimately acquainted with this nobleman. Hilario instantly suspected, that the serious Don was a rich uncle of his friend; and determined that he would give such an account of the nephew, as should occasion a solemn letter of reproof, over which he hoped to regale himself, on his return to college. He therefore jocularly said, that his companion was a fine jolly fellow, always forming connections with the girls; that he loved to rattle the dice; and that he had lately lost his next quarter's allowance, which would lower his courage at play, for some time to come. From the alteration which he perceived in the stranger's countenance, he was assured of the success of his *hum*, an absurd term given to this shameful kind of lie: And, when he got back to Cambridge, he hastened to the apartment of his friend, to enjoy the laughter which he should raise at his expence. But how was he shocked

to find him in the delirium of a fever, occasioned by a billet, which had been delivered the preceding day, purporting, “ That Lucinda had just bestowed her “ hand, upon a person much more de- “ serving of her affections, than he had “ been represented to her father by Hi- “ lario, his associate in pleasure, extrava- “ gance, and profligacy.”

By such thoughtless, and unjustifiable violations of truth, Hilario was often wounding his own peace of mind, and involving his connections in distress. He was, however, at length compelled to correct this criminal habit, through the horror which he felt, on having given rise to a fatal duel between two brothers, by jocularly insinuating to one of them, that he was rivalled in the affections of his mistress, by the other.

It would be happy, said I, if we could ascertain the restrictions, under which these
these

these fallies of frolic and jocularity may be indulged with innocence. One general rule may, I think, be admitted, that the entertainment, which we thus create to ourselves, should be such only as will be a future subject of mirth even to those, who are the present sufferers by it. But, to use the words of an excellent moralist, “ as every action may
 “ produce effects, over which human
 “ power has no influence, and which
 “ human sagacity cannot foresee ; we
 “ should not lightly venture to the verge
 “ of evil ; nor strike at others, though
 “ with a reed, lest, like the rod of Moses,
 “ it become a serpent in our hands.” *

Philocles now pursued the subject, by inquiring into the nature of EQUIVOCATION ; which Sophron defined to be a mean expedient to avoid the declaration of truth, without verbally telling a lie. An equivocation, said he, consists of

* Dr. Hawksworth.

such expressions, as admit of more than one meaning. The speaker uses them in one sense, and designs that the hearer should understand them in another. Cicero mentions a certain person, who made a truce with the enemy for thirty days, and treacherously evaded his agreement, by laying waste the country during the nights; alledging, that the truce was for so many *days*, not nights.* Such an equivocation as this, has all the guilt, and infamy of a lie; but I do not feel myself inclined to condemn the duplicity, practised by a gentleman, on the following occasion. He was returning home from the assizes at York, and was attacked on the road by a highwayman, to whom he delivered a small purse of money. The robber told him, that he should not be satisfied with a few guineas; and sternly demanded the sum, which he knew he had received, and then carried about him. The

* Vid, Cicero de Officiis, Lib. I. Cap. 13.

gentleman,

gentleman, with great apparent terror, drew out of his pocket a leathern bag, and giving it to the highwayman, said, "*Take what you want, but spare my life.*" The robber eagerly received it, and was transported with the value of his acquisition. He rode off with it, through bye lanes, till he arrived at a place of security. There he stopped to examine his booty, which to his astonishment he found to consist only of a quantity of halfpence, together with a copy of the dying speech and earnest exhortations of a malefactor, who had been executed the preceding day for robbery.

Can you acquit me, Philocles, said I, of the criminality of equivocation, when, in the exercise of my professional duties, I study, by cheerful looks and ambiguous words, to remove from my patients the horrors of despair, to mitigate the apprehensions of danger, and to deceive them into hope; that, by administering
a cordial

a cordial to the drooping spirit, I may smooth the bed of death, or revive even expiring life? For there are maladies, which rob the Philosopher of fortitude, and the Christian of consolation.

From my heart I acquit you, answered Philocles, with his wonted humanity. You do a kindness, not a wrong, to the person whom you thus deceive; and may reasonably presuppose his future approbation of that conduct, which meets with the present acquiescence of all his friends. The amiable and elegant Pliny, who had the nicest sense of honour, recites with applause, in a letter to Nepos, a story, which may perhaps contribute to satisfy your mind, and remove your scruples.

The husband of the celebrated Arria, Cæcinna Pætus, was very dangerously ill. Her son was also sick at the same time; and died. He was a youth of
uncommon

uncommon accomplishments, and fondly beloved by his parents. Arria prepared and conducted his funeral in such a manner, that her husband remained entirely ignorant of the mournful event, which occasioned that solemnity. Pætus often inquired, with anxiety, about his son; to whom she cheerfully replied, that he had slept well, and was better. But if her tears, too long restrained, were bursting forth, she instantly retired, to give vent to her grief; and when again composed, she returned to Pætus with dry eyes, and a placid countenance, quitting, as it were, all the tender feelings of the mother, at the threshold of her husband's chamber.*

But, addressing himself to Sophron, is it not a species of equivocation, and a breach of faithfulness, continued Philocles, when we do not perform our promises, according to the plain and obvious meaning of them?

* Plin. Epist. XVI. Lib. III.

Without doubt it is, answered Sophron. The moralist whom I before quoted, relates, that ten Romans, who had been taken in the battle of Cannæ, were sent by Hannibal to the senate, to propose an exchange of prisoners. Before they set out, each of them engaged, by an oath, to return to the camp of the Carthaginians, if the embassy should prove ineffectual. The senate rejected the offers of Hannibal; and nine of the prisoners honourably rendered themselves up to him. But the tenth refused to return, on pretence, that he had already discharged himself of his oath. For it seems, that he went back to the camp of the Carthaginians, soon after he quitted it, to fetch some necessaries, which he had designedly left behind, that he might be able to plead his having complied, literally, with the terms of his engagement. But the senate disdained the deceit, and commanded the artful wretch to be sent bound to Hannibal.

Mental, and other private reservations neither absolve, nor even extenuate the guilt of lying. When the unfortunate Mary queen of Scotland was married to the dauphin of France, the king, his father, solemnly ratified every article, insisted upon by the Scotch parliament, for preserving the independence of their nation, and for securing the succession of the crown to the house of Hamilton. But Mary, by his persuasion, had antecedently and privately subscribed three deeds, by which, she consigned the kingdom of Scotland, on failure of her own issue, to his family; declaring all her promises, to the contrary, to be void.* The remark of Bishop Taylor may be adopted, as the best comment on transactions of this infamous nature. If the words be a *lie* without *reservation*, they are so with it: For this does not alter the words themselves; nor the meaning

* Lord Kaimes's History of Man, Vol. IV. p. 158.

of the words; nor the purpose of him who delivers them.*

But in what light are we to regard the stratagems, falsehood, and acts of deceit, which have been employed in war, and often with applause, both in ancient and modern times?

In reply to this interesting question, Philocles observed, that war is seldom founded in justice; and that, therefore, we cannot be surpris'd that it should occasion, amongst those who wage it, a suspension of the common laws of morality. The fraudulent exploits which are practis'd, by the tacit consent, as it were, of the parties, may dazzle and surpris'e a superficial observer; but a serious, honest mind, will generally condemn them, as inconsistent with the obligations of religion and virtue; and, except under very particular circum-

* *Ductor Dubitant.* p. 498.

stances, injurious to the contending powers themselves. For, as integrity is the best policy in the conduct of individuals towards each other, it will appear to be equally so in the transactions between states, and communities, if an extensive view be taken of their great and permanent interests. Cicero, in one of his dialogues, introduces Scipio as maintaining the following excellent maxim: *non modo FALSUM esse illud, SINE INJURIA non posse, sed hoc verissimum, sine SUMMA JUSTITIA rempublicam regi non posse.* “It is so far from being true, that
 “ government cannot be carried on with-
 “ out injury to others, that nothing is
 “ more certain, than that it cannot be
 “ well administered without an inviolable
 “ adherence to the strictest justice.”
 And the propriety of this observation seems to be acknowledged, in some of the regulations of war, now universally adopted in civilized countries.

But

But a distinction should be made, between art or stratagem, and perfidy or falsehood.* The wisest and best moralists admit, that we may deceive our enemies, when we have a just cause of war, by any such signs, as import no profession of communicating our sentiments to them. Thus I have heard, that the duke of Marlborough, when he commanded the allied army in Germany, called a council of war, on a particular occasion, to determine whether he should attack the enemy on the succeeding day. His general officers were unanimous in recommending the measure; but the duke expressed his objections to it in the strongest terms; and the council submitted to his superior judgment. When he retired into his tent, prince Eugene followed him, and lamented the disgrace, in which such a decision would involve them. “My resolution,” said the duke, “is fixed to give battle to-

* See Appendix, Sect. VII.

“morrow ; and I shall instantly issue
 “the necessary orders. But I opposed
 “this plan in council, because I had re-
 “ceived secret information, that our
 “enemies had concerted the means of
 “becoming acquainted with the result
 “of our deliberations. And you will
 “agree with me in the necessity of de-
 “ceiving them.”

But men of true courage and honour,
 must hold in detestation all treachery and
 falsehood. The earl of Peterborough, in
 conjunction with the prince of Darmstadt,
 carried on the siege of Barcelona, about
 the beginning of the present century.
 The governor offered to capitulate, and
 came to a parley with lord Peterborough
 at the gates of the city. The articles
 were not yet signed ; when suddenly
 loud shouts and huzzas were heard in
 the town. “ You have perfidiously be-
 trayed us ! ” said the governor to the earl :
 “ Whilst we are capitulating, with un-
 “suspecting

“suspecting honour and sincerity, your
“English soldiers have entered the city
“by the ramparts; and are now com-
“mitting rapine, murder, and every kind
“of violence.” “You do injustice to
“the English,” replied the general:
“This treachery is chargeable only on
“the troops of Darmstadt. But permit
“me to enter into the town with my
“soldiers, and I will instantly repress
“the outrage, and return to the gate
“to finish the capitulation.”

The offer was made with an air of truth, and sincerity; and accepted with a generous confidence. Peterborough hastened into the streets, where he found the Germans and Catalans pillaging the houses of the principal inhabitants. He drove them away; and obliged them to leave the booty, which they were carrying off: And, after having quieted all disturbances, he rejoined the governor, and completed the capitulation, without de-

manding any new, or more advantageous terms. The Spaniards were astonished at the magnanimity of the English, whom they had generally regarded before as faithless barbarians.*

Sophon remarked, that the glory, on this occasion, appeared to belong chiefly to lord Peterborough, as an individual. But I recollect, continued he, a transaction in the Grecian history, which seems to evince an equal sense of honour, and detestation of perfidy, in the whole body of the Athenians. These people were inflamed with the ambition of governing Greece; and Themistocles, a favourite general, exerted all his talents to accomplish the design. One day he assembled the citizens of Athens, and informed them, he had a most important plan to propose; but that he could not communicate it to them, because the success of it depended upon

* See Voltaire's *Siecle de Louis XIV.*

secrecy. He therefore requested them to appoint a confidential person, to whom he might explain his views, and whose approbation of them might have the force of public authority. Aristides was unanimously chosen; and Themistocles laid open to him the project, which he had conceived, of burning the whole fleet of the Grecian states, then lying unguarded in a neighbouring port; the destruction of which, he said, could not fail to secure the dominion of Athens. Aristides returned to the assembly, and declared, that the project of Themistocles promised the greatest benefit to the commonwealth; but that it was perfidious and unjust. The people instantly, and with one voice, rejected the proposal. But the Athenians were soon afterwards corrupted by prosperity: And Thucydides informs us, it became, with them, a maxim of state, “that nothing is dishonourable, which is advantageous.”*

* Thucydid. Lib. VI.

Here I could not forbear to mention a noble, and long-continued exertion of public faith and commercial honour, though it was a slight digression from the topic of discourse. The Spanish galeons, destined to supply Tierra Firma, and the kingdoms of Peru and Chili, with almost every article of necessary consumption, touch first at Carthagena, and then at Porto-Bello. In the latter place a fair is opened; the wealth of America is exchanged for the manufactures of Europe; and, during its prescribed term of forty days, the richest traffic on the face of the earth is begun and finished, with unbounded confidence, and the utmost simplicity of transaction. No bale of goods is ever opened, no chest of treasure is examined. Both are received on the credit of the persons to whom they belong; and only one instance of fraud is recorded, during the long period in which trade was carried on with this liberal confidence. All the
coined

coined silver which was brought from Peru to Porto-Bello in the year 1654, was found to be adulterated, and to be mingled with a fifth part of base metal. The Spanish merchants, with their usual integrity, sustained the whole loss, and indemnified the foreigners by whom they were employed. The fraud was detected; and the treasurer of the revenue in Peru, the author of it, was publicly burnt.*

Are we not every day guilty of lying, pursued Philocles, in the common forms of civility; and in various modes of speech, which custom has introduced?

Surely not, replied Sophron; for if these be well understood, no one is deceived by them.

I do not entirely accord with you, Sophron, said I; and I believe it will not be easy to justify, upon the principles

* Robertson's Hist. of America, Vol. II, Note 93. B. 8.

either of wisdom or strict morality, many complimentary expressions used in conversation. You remember the letter of the ambassador from Bantam, which is inserted in one of the volumes of the Spectator. This honest stranger informs his master, that the people of England call him and his subjects barbarians, because they speak the truth ; and account themselves polite and civilized, because they say one thing, and mean another. “ On
“ my first landing,” says he, “ one told
“ me that he should be glad to do me
“ any service in his power. I desired
“ him therefore to carry my portman-
“ teau ; but instead of serving me ac-
“ cording to his promise, he laughed,
“ and ordered another to do it. I lodg-
“ ed the first week at the house of a per-
“ son, who intreated me to think myself
“ at home, and to consider his house as
“ my own. Accordingly, the next morn-
“ ing I began to knock down one of the
“ walls, in order to let in the fresh air ;
“ and

“ and packed up some of the household
“ goods, of which I intended to make
“ thee a present. But the false varlet
“ soon sent me word, that he would have
“ no such doings in his house.” Per-
haps, however, I may incur the charge
of falshood, by quoting the letter of an
ambassador, who never existed.

Such fictions, Philocles remarked, partake not of the nature of lies. They are intended to convey amusement or instruction, not to serve the purposes of deceit.

Nor is the case essentially different, with respect to the common forms of civility. Their import is known to all who use them; and, as they are expressive of urbanity and benevolence, they tend, under proper restrictions, to soften the asperities, and heighten the pleasures of social intercourse. Genuine courtesy has, indeed, its seat in the heart; and
implies

implies the desire of gratifying others, in the subordinate offices of life, by the sacrifice of our own ease or interest. It is essential, therefore, to every amiable character; and can only display itself in such appropriated modes as custom has established in different countries, or amongst different ranks of men. But, when the *substance* is wanting, some benefit is derived to the world even from its *forms*: And to the rustic, who claims the privilege of speaking improper truths, or of acting with rude and malicious sincerity, we may justly address the words of Shakespear:

----- “ This is some fellow,
 “ Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth
 affect
 “ A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
 “ Quite from his nature. He can't flatter, he,
 “ An honest mind and plain; he must speak truth,
 “ An they will take it so; if not, 'tis plain.”

On this account, I cannot but condemn the affected severity of Paulinus, bishop
 of

of Nola, who reproves his correspondent Sulpicius Severus, for having subscribed himself his servant. "Beware," says this primitive writer, "thou subscribe
 "not thyself HIS SERVANT, who is thy
 "BROTHER; for flattery is sinful; and
 "it is not a testimony of humility, to
 "give those honours to men, which are
 "only due to the One Lord, Master,
 "and God."* We find the patriarch Abraham actuated by no such scruples, though he lived in the period of pastoral simplicity, and was highly distinguished for his virtue and integrity. "*And he
 "lift up his eyes, and looked; and lo, three
 "men stood by him: And when he saw them,
 "he ran to meet them from the tent door,
 "and bowed himself toward the ground;
 "and said, My lord, if now I have found
 "favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray
 "thee, from thy servant."*†

* See Barclay's Apology, p. 525.

† Genesis, Chap. xviii. Ver, 2, 3.

Lot, also, is represented, in the book of Genesis, as accosting, in similar terms, two strangers, with whose dignity he was then unacquainted. “*And he said, “ Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray “ you, into your servant’s house, and tarry “ all night, and wash your feet; and ye “ shall rise up early, and go on your ways.”**”

The conduct and expressions of these venerable patriarchs, might, I observed, be perfectly consistent with the nicest adherence to truth and sincerity. For though they stiled themselves the *servants* of the strangers, whom they addressed, they could not mean to extend the term beyond such *services*, as the laws of hospitality required.

Similar laws, answered Philocles, which general consent has established, bind every man, in the common intercourse of life, to restrain his angry

* Genesis; Chap. xix. Ver. 2.

passions, to silence his severe judgments, to suppress his pride and arrogance, and not only to correct whatever is offensive in his manners, but to shew that urbanity of spirit, which, by its benevolent attentions, contributes to alleviate misery, and to increase the sum of public happiness and order. Mistake me not, however, by supposing that I would recommend forward professions, a fawning demeanour, or unlimited complaisance. Integrity of heart, and steadiness of principle, forbid all sinful conformity with the world: And I would neither flatter folly, countenance vice, nor yield up one important duty to artificial politeness. But the sacrifice of my own pride, resentment, caprice, or ill nature, to social ease and enjoyment, may often be required: And he, who, like Diogenes, neither possesses the substance, nor the form of courtesy, should be banished from the world. This Cynic, you remember, when he paid a visit to Plato,

who united a taste for elegance with the love of philosophy, exulted in the rudeness of reproof, and bedaubing with his dirty feet the fine carpet, which covered the floor, cried out, “ Thus I trample on the pride of Plato.” “ But with far greater pride,” retorted Plato, with a sarcastic severity, which the occasion fully justified. Lord Bacon mentions two noblemen of his acquaintance, one of whom kept a very magnificent table, but treated his guests with illiberal freedom : The other, when he entertained the same guests, probably with humbler cheer, but more politeness, used to ask them, “ Tell truly, was there never a flout, or dry blow given at my lord’s table ?” To which the guests answered, “ Such and such a thing passed.” “ I thought,” said this nobleman, “ he would mar a good dinner.”*

Urbanity has been admirably characterised, by a celebrated writer, under

* Bacon’s Essays, XXXII.

the appellation of GENTLENESS. “ This virtue,” he observes, “ is founded on a
“ sense of what we owe to Him who
“ made us, and to the common nature
“ of which we all share. It arises from
“ reflection on our own failures and
“ wants; and from just views of the
“ condition and the duty of man. It is
“ native feeling, heightened, and im-
“ proved by principle. It is the heart,
“ which easily relents; which feels for
“ every thing that is human; and is
“ backward and slow to inflict the least
“ wound. It is affable in its address,
“ and mild in its demeanour; ever ready
“ to oblige, and willing to be obliged
“ by others; breathing habitual kindness
“ towards friends, courtesy to strangers,
“ long suffering to enemies. It exer-
“ cises authority with moderation; ad-
“ ministers reproof with tenderness; con-
“ fers favours with ease and modesty. It
“ is unassuming in opinion, and tem-
“ perate in zeal. It contends not eagerly

“ about trifles ; slow to contradict, and
 “ still slower to blame ; but prompt to
 “ allay diffention, and to restore peace.
 “ It neither intermeddles unnecessarily
 “ with the affairs, nor pries inquisitively
 “ into the secrets, of others. It delights
 “ above all things to alleviate distress,
 “ and, if it cannot dry up the falling
 “ tear, to sooth at least the grieving
 “ heart. Where it has not the power of
 “ being useful, it is never burdensome.
 “ It seeks to please, rather than to shine
 “ and dazzle ; and conceals with care
 “ that superiority, either of talents or
 “ of rank, which is oppressive to those
 “ who are beneath it. In a word, it is
 “ that spirit, and that tenour of manners,
 “ which the Gospel of Christ enjoins,
 “ when it commands us *to bear one ano-*
 “ *ther’s burdens ; to rejoice with those who*
 “ *rejoice, and to weep with those who weep ;*
 “ *to please every one his neighbour for his*
 “ *good ; to be kind and tender-hearted ; to*
 “ *be*

*“ be pitiful and courteous ; to support the weak, and to be patient towards all men.”**

Sophon appeared to be much impressed with this animated and striking picture of courtesy ; but he suggested to Philocles, that amongst the inferior offices of social life, he had not noticed the duties of COUNSEL and REPROOF. These, said he, I fear, cannot be administered by a mind under the influence of gentleness, without the concealment, and sometimes, even the violation of truth.

The former part of your allegation, replied Philocles, may perhaps be granted ; but the latter I cannot admit. Advice and reprehension require, indeed, the utmost delicacy ; and painful truths should be delivered in the softest terms, and expressed no farther, than is necessary to produce their due effect. A courteous man will also mix what is conciliating,

* Blair's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 150.

with what is offensive ; praise, with censure ; deference and respect, with the authority of admonition, so far as these can be done in consistence with probity and honour. For the mind revolts against all censorian power, which displays pride or pleasure in finding fault ; and is wounded by the bare suspicion of such disgraceful tyranny. But advice, divested of the harshness, and yet retaining the honest warmth, of truth, “ is like honey, put round the brim of a vessel full of wormwood.”* Even this vehicle, however, is sometimes insufficient to conceal the draught of bitterness ; of which we are furnished with an admirable and diverting instance, in the history of Gil Blas. This young man became the favourite of the archbishop of Grenada ; in whose family he enjoyed a lucrative and agreeable office ; and future prospects of much higher preferment. The archbishop regarded him as a person of taste

* *Memoirs of Brandenburg, by the King of Prussia.*

and sentiment; and one day entered into the following conversation with him.

“ Listen, with attention, to what I am
“ going to deliver. My chief pleasure
“ consists in preaching; the Lord gives
“ a blessing to my homilies; they touch
“ the hearts of sinners; make them se-
“ riously reflect on their conduct, and
“ have recourse to instant repentance.
“ This success should alone be a suffi-
“ cient incitement to my studies: never-
“ theless, I will confess to thee my weak-
“ nesses, and acknowledge, that I propose
“ to myself another reward; a reward,
“ with which the delicacy of my nature
“ reproaches me in vain. The honour
“ of being reckoned a perfect orator, has
“ charmed my imagination: My per-
“ formances are thought equally nervous
“ and refined; but I am anxious to avoid
“ the misfortune of those who write too
“ long; and I wish to retire without
“ forfeiting one tittle of my reputation.
“ Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas, what

“ I exact of thy zeal, is, that whenever
 “ thou shalt perceive a failure in my
 “ genius, or the least mark of the imbe-
 “ cility of old age in my compositions,
 “ that thou wilt immediately advertise
 “ me of it. I dare not trust to my own
 “ judgment, which may be seduced by
 “ self-love; but make choice of thine,
 “ because I know it to be good, and
 “ am resolved to stand by thy decision.”

Some time after this discourse, the prelate was seized with a fit of apoplexy. He was, however, soon relieved; and such salutary medicines were administered, that his health seemed to be re-established. But his understanding suffered a severe shock, which was plainly perceptible in the first homily that he composed. The succeeding one proved perfectly decisive; as it abounded in repetitions, vain arguments, and false pathos. “ Now,” said Gil Blas to himself, “ master homily-critic, prepare to exercise the office,
 “ which

“ which you have undertaken. You see
“ that the faculties of his grace begin
“ to fail. It is your duty to give him
“ notice of it, not only as the depository
“ of his thoughts, but likewise, lest you
“ should be anticipated by some other
“ of his friends.” But the embarrass-
ment was, how to convey the mortifying
intimation to his patron. Fortunately,
the archbishop extricated him from the
difficulty, by inquiring, what people said
of him, and if they were satisfied with
his last discourse. Gil Blas answered,
that the homily had not succeeded so well
as the others, in affecting the audience.
“How,” replied the prelate, with astonish-
ment, “ has it met with any Aristarchus?”
“ No, sir,” said Gil Blas, “ by no means :
“ But since you have laid your injunctions
“ upon me to be open and sincere, I
“ will take the liberty of telling you,
“ that your late discourse, in my judg-
“ ment, has not altogether the energy of
“ your prior performances.” The arch-
bishop

bishop grew pale at these words ; and said, with a forced smile, “ So then, “ Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your “ taste ? You think my understanding “ enfeebled, don’t you ? ” “ I should not have spoken so freely,” answered Gil Blas, “ if your grace had not com- “ manded me. I do no more, therefore, “ than obey you ; and I most humbly “ beg that you will not be offended at “ my freedom.” “ God forbid,” cried the prelate, with precipitation ; “ God “ forbid, that I should find fault with it. “ This would be extremely unjust. I am “ not angry, that you speak your senti- “ ments : it is the sentiment only that “ I condemn. Know, that I never com- “ posed a better homily, than that, which “ you disapprove ; for my genius, thank “ Heaven, hath yet lost nothing of its “ vigour. Henceforth, however, I will “ chuse an abler confidant than you are. “ Go,” added he, pushing Gil Blas out of his closet, by the shoulders ; “ go, “ tell my treasurer to give you a hundred “ ducats.

“ducats. I wish you all manner of
“prosperity, with a little more taste.”*

But we have enlarged sufficiently on this part of our subject. Permit me, therefore, Sophron, to proceed, by inquiring, whether SECRECY, in certain cases, be not a branch of faithfulness, or veracity?

It is a very important one, answered Sophron. To betray the confidence that is reposed in us, whether we have tacitly, or by a promise, bound ourselves to fidelity, evinces a weak understanding, or a bad heart. Levity, an eagerness to communicate, or the desire of seeming to be important, are the most frequent causes of the breach of secrecy; but it is to be feared, that it sometimes originates from baseness and malevolence.

This offence was deemed infamous by the ancient Persians. For it was

* Gil Blas, Vol. III.

their opinion, says Quintus Curtius, that however deficient a man might be in the talents, requisite to the attainment of excellency, the negative virtues were, at least, in his power; and that he might be silent, although he could not be eloquent.

Here Philocles judiciously remarked, that the laws of secrecy are not, in all cases, to be regarded as inviolable; for we are under antecedent obligations, of a nature still more forcible and binding. If any atrocious design, either against an individual or the state, be communicated in confidence to us, it is our duty to dissuade the party, if possible, from the execution of it. But should our endeavours appear to be unavailing, the concealment of what we know, might involve us in the guilt of the offence; and we should be justly punishable, as accessaries to the crime.* At Florence,

* See Appendix, Sect. IX.

and in other states of Italy, a man apprised of a plot against the government, is put to death for not revealing it.* In England, *misprision of treason* is punished, by forfeiture of rents, and of goods, and by imprisonment during life: And *misprision of felony*, by imprisonment for a discretionary term, and by fine and ransom, at the pleasure of the king's judges.†

If such *misprisions* be really culpable, how comes it to pass, I asked, that informers are almost universally held in contempt and detestation?

Because few villains, said Philocles, will communicate their wicked designs to any but those, whom they believe inclined to participate in the commission of them. Hence there is generally a presumption of previous guilt in the

* Guiccardini's Hist.

† Blackstone's Commentaries,

informer: And to this guilt, we super-add that of baseness and perfidy; as we are not willing to suppose that he is influenced to perform this public act, either by motives of private virtue, or of patriotism. However, we should be careful not to carry our prepossession against informers, even of this class, too far. They do essential service to the community; and may, perhaps, think this service the best atonement for their past guilt, and the fullest proof of their present repentance.

There is another branch of faithfulness, which it is also dishonourable to violate; and which lays us under an obligation to avoid TATTLING, TALE-BEARING, and CENSORIOUSNESS. In the unguarded hours of social intercourse, and still more in the commerce of domestic life, the wisest and the best of men speak their thoughts without reserve; and casting off all restraint, may sometimes deviate,

both

both in their words and actions, from the rules of strict propriety. To relate such inadvertencies, is meanness; to ridicule them, is ill nature; and to exaggerate them, is calumny.*

Sophron now turned our attention to a most important branch of moral Truth, by inquiring whether INSINCERITY in RELIGION may not be deemed a highly criminal species of lying?

Certainly it may, returned Philocles. GOD is a being of spotless purity, who searches the heart, and commands us to worship him “*in spirit and in truth.*” “*Lying lips,*” whether employed in false professions of faith or of piety, “*are an abomination to the Lord.*” And he who

* *Absentem qui rodit Amicum,*

Qui non defendit, alio culpante, solutos

Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis,

Fingere qui non visa potest, commissa tacere

Qui nequit; hic Niger est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 4.

can, habitually, practise insincerity and hypocrisy, in those serious and important transactions with his Creator, Benefactor, and Judge, which have eternity for their object, is not likely to pay any steady regard to temporary interests, resulting from the laws of society, or the ordinary obligations of morality. When one of the kings of France solicited M. Bougier, who was a protestant, to conform to the Roman Catholic religion, promising him, in return, a commission or a government, "Sire," replied he, "if I could be persuaded to betray my God for a marshal's staff, I might be induced to betray my king for a bribe of much less value."

It was a noble reply! cried Sophron, with ingenuous warmth; and the recital of it brings to my memory a story, which the duke of Sully has recorded of Ambrose Parè, a zealous Huguenot, and surgeon to Charles the Ninth of France.

He

He was with the king, during the time of the massacre of Paris, when so many thousand innocent and virtuous persons were inhumanly butchered in cold blood; and was perhaps a witness of the monarch's firing with a carabine, upon the wretched Calvinists, who fled from their murderers by the windows of the palace. The courtiers, as they came into the royal presence, vied with each other, in boasting of the barbarities which they had committed; and Charles said to Parè, whose religious opinions he well knew, "The time is now come, when
" I shall have none but catholics in my
" dominions." "Sire," answered he, without embarrassment or perturbation, "can you forget your promise to me, that I should never be obliged to go
" to mass!" The duke of Sully seems to be of opinion, that the edict, which Charles issued the succeeding day, to prohibit the continuance of the massacre, was partly owing to the intrepidity and influence of Parè.

The conduct of Parè, said Philocles, on so trying an occasion, affords a striking proof of firmness and sincerity, in the profession of religious faith. But examples, of much higher degrees of similar fidelity, are to be found in the earlier annals of the Christian church. Nor are instances wanting, even in the heathen world, of a zealous and fearless attachment to those rites, which ignorance deemed sacred, and which individuals or bodies of men bound themselves, by solemn engagements, to perform. When the Gauls were become masters of Rome, they besieged the capitol; and closely guarded every avenue, to prevent the escape of a single Roman citizen. Under these circumstances of danger, Caius Fabius Dorso, a young man of an illustrious family, descended from the capitol, bearing certain holy utensils in his hands; and passed through the midst of the enemy, regardless of their menaces, to offer a sacrifice to the
gods

gods on the hill Quirinalis. This sacrifice, it was the custom of his ancestors to perform yearly, on a stated day; and when he had finished the solemnity, the Gauls, though a fierce and barbarous people, suffered him to return unmolested, admiring his piety, and astonished at his intrepidity.* Facts, like these, should make us blush at indifference, and abhor dissimulation in religion. But whilst we allow such impressions to produce their full influence on our hearts, let us beware of passing judgment upon others, with rashness or unchristian fervor. Intemperate zeal is apt to beget a malignancy of spirit, no less incompatible with the love of God, than with benevolence to man. The conviction of the mind, in matters of faith, often depends more upon education and authority, than on the exertions of reason: And if we see men professing to believe,

* Vid. Liv. Hist.

what is unintelligible or absurd, we should be well assured that they have not deceived themselves, before we accuse them of mocking their Creator, and imposing on the world.

We may pity ignorance, and lament credulity ; but hypocrisy, urged Sophron, merits from us no indulgence : And this species of falshood is so characteristically marked, that it cannot be mistaken. Who, that observes a man sanctified in his behaviour, and assiduous in his public devotions, whilst he is at the same time selfish, malevolent, bigoted, and oppressive, will hesitate to charge him with the grossest and most infamous dissimulation ?

If there be sufficient proof, that this is really his temper of mind, I acknowledge, said Philocles, that you may and ought to brand him with the name of hypocrite. But no man should be charged
with

with a crime univerſally odious, on flight or equivocal evidence.* There is a ſpecies of devotion, which, having its ſeat chiefly in the imagination and the paſſions, bears no exact proportion to the virtue of the character in which it is found: And charity, together with a humble ſenſe of our own infirmities, will always lead us to put the moſt favourable conſtruction on the conduct of our fellow creatures. We ſhould remember alſo, that enthuiasm and ſuperſtition have often appeared, with the external marks of diſſimulation. The famous lord Herbert, of Cherbury, had written an elaborate work againſt Chriſtianity, which he intitled, *De Veritate, prout diſtinguitur à Revelatione*. But knowing that it would meet with much oppoſition, he remained ſome time in anxious ſuſpence about the publication of it. Providence, however, as he informs us, kindly interpoſed,

* See Appendix, Sect. X.

and determined his wavering resolutions. Hear the marvellous tale, which he relates !

“ Being thus doubtful in my chamber,
 “ one fair day in the summer, my case-
 “ ment being opened towards the south,
 “ the sun shining clear, and no wind
 “ stirring, I took my book *De Veritate*
 “ in my hand, and kneeling on my
 “ knees, devoutly said, *O thou eternal*
 “ *God, I am not satisfied enough whether I*
 “ *shall publish this book; if it be for thy*
 “ *glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from*
 “ *heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.* I had
 “ no sooner spoken these words, but a
 “ loud, though yet gentle noise, came
 “ from the heavens, which did so com-
 “ fort and cheer me, that I took my
 “ petition as granted, and that I had the
 “ sign I demanded; whereupon also I
 “ resolved to print my book.”*

* See the Life of Lord Herbert, written by himself.

It must appear strange, that a man, who had spent a considerable part of his life in courts and camps, should possess such a deluded imagination. And this delusion will be still more suspicious, when you are told, that lord Herbert's chief argument against Christianity is, the improbability that Heaven should reveal its laws only to a portion of the earth. For how could he, who doubted of a *partial*, believe an *individual* revelation? Or is it possible, that he could have the vanity to think his book of such importance, as to extort a declaration of the Divine will, when the interest and happiness of a fourth part of mankind, were deemed, by him, objects inadequate to the like display of goodness? * Do these arguments convince you of lord Herbert's hypocrisy? Your conclusion is hasty, and unjust. Read his life, and you will be satisfied, that

* See Walpole's Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

the warmth of his temper might expose him to self-deception; but that he was incapable of obtruding on the world, what he knew to be a falsehood.

Sophron modestly acknowledged, that the signs of religious dissimulation might be less decisive, than he had supposed. But allow me, said he, to contrast your instance of lord Herbert, with two facts concerning Oliver Cromwell; to shew that the charge of hypocrisy may be justly grounded on single actions, without taking into our view the whole tenour of a man's life. Suppose a stranger, ignorant of the craftiness and ambition of Cromwell, to have been present in the long parliament, when the ordinance for the trial of Charles I. was read and assented to; would he have hesitated to think him an hypocrite, after hearing him deliver the following words? “Should any one have voluntarily proposed to bring the king to
“punish-

“punishment, I should have regarded
“him as the greatest traitor ; but since
“Providence and necessity have cast us
“upon it, I will pray to God for a blef-
“sing on your councils ; though I am
“not prepared to give you my advice
“on this important occasion. Even I
“myself, when I was lately offering up
“a petition for his majesty’s restoration,
“felt my tongue cleave to the roof of
“my mouth ; and considered this super-
“natural movement, as the answer which
“Heaven, having rejected the king,
“had sent to my supplications.”*

Let us further suppose, that this stranger attended the high court of justice, and saw Cromwell, when he took the pen in his hand, to sign the warrant for the king’s execution, jocularly be- daub the face of his neighbour with the ink ; could he forbear to express his disgust at the levity which he then ob-

* Whitlock.

reserved; and his abhorrence of the gross dissimulation, to which he had been before a witness?

You have drawn your example, replied Philocles, from that distracted period of our history, when truth appears to have been banished from public life. The despotic views of a monarch, who was under the influence of a popish queen, a bigoted prelate, and a corrupt statesman, led him to the practice of deceit and falsehood;* and the parties,

* Consult Clarendon, Vol. I. p. 22. Rushworth, Vol. I. from p. 119 to 127. Hume's Hist. 4to. Vol. I. p. 103. Ed. 1754. "He had promised to the last house of commons a redress of this religious grievance; but he was too apt, in imitation of his father, to consider these promises as temporary expedients, which after the dissolution of the parliament, he was not any farther to regard." Id. p. 156. See also the Life of the Lord Keeper Williams, p. 143. Whitlock, p. 10. The Petition of Rights. Harris's Hist. Sidney's State Papers, Vol. II. p. 665, &c. Rapin says, "Charles made frequent use of mental reservations, concealed in ambiguous terms, and general expressions, of which he reserved the explanation to a proper time and place. For this reason, the parliament could never confide in his promises, wherein there

who united in opposing his encroachments on the civil and religious rights of the people, soon deviated from their original principles; and availing themselves of the gloomy enthusiasm of the times, concealed their perfidy and ambition, under the mask of pious zeal, and
 divine

“ was always either some ambiguous term, or some restriction
 “ that rendered them useless. This may be said to be one of
 “ the principal causes of his ruin; because giving thereby
 “ occasion of distrust, it was not possible to find any expedi-
 “ ent for a peace with the parliament. He was thought to
 “ act with so little sincerity in his engagements, that it was
 “ believed there was no dependence on his word. The
 “ parliament could not even resolve to debate on the king’s
 “ propositions, so convinced were they of his ability to hide
 “ his real intentions, under ambiguous expressions.” Rapin’s
 Hist. Vol. II p. 570. The following passage is taken from
 the works of an historian, who is acknowledged to have
 been very partial to king Charles. “ *Malè posita est lex, quæ*
 “ *tumultuariè posita est,* was one of those positions of Aristotle,”
 says he, “ which hath never since been contradicted; and
 “ was an advantage, that, being well managed, and stoutly
 “ insisted upon, would, in spite of all their machinations,
 “ which were not yet firmly and solidly formed, have brought
 “ them to a temper of being treated with. But I have some
 “ cause to believe, that even this argument, which was un-
 “ answerable for the rejecting that bill, was applied for the
 “ confirming it; and an opinion that the violence and force,
 “ used

divine illuminations. That Cromwell was guilty of hypocrify, may with too much probability be inferred from numerous and undoubted facts. But I know not whether the two, which you have related, would have authoris'd a stranger to charge him publicly, with this reproachful offence. Cromwell pos-

“ used in procuring it, rendered it absolutely invalid and void, “ made the confirmation of it less considered, as not being of “ strength to make that act good, which was in itself null. “ And I doubt this logic had an influence upon other acts of “ less moment.” Clarendon’s Hist. Vol. II. p. 30. Rapin makes the following observation on this passage. “ Let the “ reader judge after this, if we may boast of king Charles’s “ sincerity, since even in passing acts of parliament, which “ are the most authentic and solemn promises a king of “ England can make, he gave his assent, merely in an “ opinion, that they were void in themselves, and conse- “ quently he was not bound by this engagement.” I have inserted these references and quotations, not merely to authenticate my charge against king Charles, but to shew, from his unhappy fate, how delusive, dangerous, and infamous, is the following political observation of Machiavel. “ It has “ appeared by experience, that those princes who have made “ light of their word, and artfully deceived mankind, have “ all along done great things, and have at length got the better “ of such as proceeded upon honourable principles.”

ferred

essed a vigorous, active, and enlarged understanding; and could assume, whenever he pleased, that dignity of manners, which befitted his high station. But when he relaxed himself from the toils of war, or the cares of government, his amusements frequently consisted in the lowest buffoonery. Yet in these apparently unguarded moments, he was upon the watch to remark the characters, designs, and weaknesses of men; and to penetrate into the inmost recesses of their hearts. Before the trial of Charles, a meeting was held between the chiefs of the republican party and the general officers, to concert the model of the intended new government. After the debates on this most interesting and important subject, Ludlow informs us, that Cromwell, by way of frolic, threw a cushion at his head; and when Ludlow took up another cushion to return the joke, the general ran down stairs, and
was

was in danger of breaking his bones in the hurry.* It is evident, therefore, that this extraordinary man might really be serious, under the appearance of levity. But this topic has engrossed too much of our attention: And I will only add, that the more we cultivate moral or religious sincerity in ourselves, the less disposed we shall be to suspect the want of it in others.

There is a character, said Sophron, of genuine dignity and importance, not usurped like that of Cromwell, the lustre of which has been tarnished by the charge of religious dissimulation. This charge, you know, is laid in the strongest terms against the apostle Peter, by St. Paul himself, who writes thus to the Galatians: “ *But when Peter came to Antioch, I with-*
 “ *stood him to the face, because he was to be*
 “ *blamed. For before that certain came from*

* Hume’s Hist.

“ James, he did eat with the Gentiles ; but
 “ when they were come, he withdrew, and
 “ separated himself, fearing them which were
 “ of the circumcision. And the other Jews
 “ dissembled likewise with him ; insomuch
 “ that Barnabas was carried away with
 “ their dissimulation. But when I saw that
 “ they walked not uprightly, according to the
 “ Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all,
 “ If thou, being a Jew, livest after the
 “ manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,
 “ why compellest thou the Gentiles to live
 “ as do the Jews ? ”

The conduct of Peter, on this occasion, is the more extraordinary, as he appears to have had the fullest conviction of the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies, by the promulgation of the Gospel of Christ :* A conviction, founded on an immediate revelation from heaven ; in consequence of which he baptized the centurion Cornelius and his family.

* Acts, Chap. v. Ver. 7, 8.

“ And he said unto them, Ye know how
 “ that it is an unlawful thing for a man
 “ that is a Jew, to keep company with, or
 “ come unto one of another nation; but God
 “ hath shewed me, that I should not call any
 “ man common or unclean: For of a truth
 “ I perceive that God is no respecter of
 “ persons: But in every nation, he that
 “ feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is
 “ accepted with him.”*

The enemies of Christianity, answered Philocles, have indecently and unjustly triumphed in this dispute between the apostles: And its friends, with a zeal no less heated and erroneous, have anxiously sought to disavow, or to evade it. Two primitive fathers † of the church, have even represented it as a stratagem or deceit, concerted privately, for the benefit of the Jewish converts: But Austin rejects this defence with proper

* Acts, Chap. x.

† Chrysoftom and Jerom.

indignation, as dishonourable to the character of Paul, and inadequate to the justification of Peter, whose conduct he confesses to have been worthy of reprehension. The truth, indeed, seems to be, that this great apostle suffered himself to be governed, on the unfortunate occasion now alluded to, as on several others of his life, by the warmth and impetuosity of his passions. But dissimulation is not the concomitant of such a temper of mind: And as the history of Peter sufficiently evinces, that this vice was foreign to his nature, it could originate only, in the present instance, from the sudden impression of fear on one, not yet completely disciplined in the school of fortitude. Let us learn, therefore, Sophron, from the severity of St. Paul's rebuke, to avoid all mean prevarications, or time-serving compliances, inconsistent with our religious principles; and *“to walk uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel; holding fast the liberty, with which Christ has made us free.”*

May we remember also, in the judgments which we form, concerning the faith and practices of others, that our great Master and Lawgiver has invested them with the same freedom, which we ourselves enjoy ; and that if an apostle was not authorised to impose a yoke on others, we can have no claim to preside over conscience, however erroneous it may be, or to assume any power in spiritual matters, but what arises from the persuasive influence of superior reason : And even in the exercise of this faculty, our language and treatment should be such, as to manifest the benignity and gentleness of Christian toleration.

I could not hear the term *toleration* from the mouth of Philocles, without expressing some objections to it, although it has been adopted by Mr. Locke, and other writers of the first distinction. For words, I observed, have a considerable
influence

influence on opinions; and the present term appears to be injurious to that religious liberty, which it is designed to import. It implies a *right* to impose articles of faith, and modes of worship; that non-conformity is a crime; and that the *sufferance* of it is a matter of favour or lenity. But the non-conformist in every country, whether he be a Christian at Constantinople, a Protestant at Rome, an Episcopalian in Scotland, or a Presbyterian in England, if his rational principles be consonant to his practice, will regard this claim of *right* as usurpation, and will urge, that it has neither been conferred by Jesus Christ, nor delegated by the people. Our Saviour expressly declares, "*My kingdom is not of this world:*" And his religion was persecuted and oppressed, during the period of its greatest purity and perfection, and when the ministers of it had gifts and powers which are now unknown. The people could not delegate such a right

to any man, or body of men : For the human mind is so mutable, that no individual can fix a standard of his own faith, much less can he commission another to establish one for him and his posterity. And this power would in no hands be so dangerous, as in those of the statesman or priest, who has the folly and presumption to think himself qualified to exercise it.

Philocles, by his silence, seemed to acquiesce in what I had advanced : And when I apologised, afterwards, for the interruption, which I had more than once occasioned, to the methodical discussion of the subject in debate, he very politely replied, that the freedom of conversation admits not of a rigid adherence to the precise rules of system. But were it otherwise, said he, the mind is relieved from weariness, and animated to more attention, by seasonable digressions, if not too long, or too often repeated.

That

That I am not averſe to enter into them myſelf, you may already have obſerved, and will now find, by my recalling to Sophron's memory the diſpute between the apoſtles Paul and Peter; and deducing from it an argument in favour of the truth of Chriſtianity. It is obvious, I think, from this incident, that there was no combination to deceive mankind amongſt the firſt preachers of the Goſpel; and that if, on ordinary occaſions, they were actuated by the common weakneſſes and prejudices of human nature, they neither attempted to conceal, nor to extenuate them. With the ſimplicity of truth, they related facts, as they occurred, whether advantageous or otherwiſe to their characters. And every unprejudiced judge will diſcover, in the records of the Goſpel, ſuch internal marks of fidelity, as no other hiſtory, either of ancient or modern periods, can diſplay. Juſtly, therefore, may we apply to the writings of the Evangeliſts, that maxim

of Cicero, “ *Quis nescit primam esse historię legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat; deinde, ne quid veri, non audeat?* ”*

— A pause ensued; and the conversation seemed to be concluded. But Sophron taking up Locke’s Essay on the Human Understanding, which happened to lie on the table before him, read the distinction which that author makes, between moral and metaphysical truth. This suggested fresh matter of discussion, and gave rise to a variety of observations, on the danger of error, and on the conduct of reason in our intellectual pursuits. Philocles particularly enlarged on the pernicious consequences of supporting FALSE OPINIONS, for the sake of argument, in public or private disputations; and represented this practice as one great source of scepticism and infidelity, amongst literary men. † The ima-

* Cicero de Oratore, Lib. II.

† See Appendix, Sect. VI.

gination, said he, is struck with novelty ; it appears honourable to shake off the fetters of vulgar prejudice ; and pride is doubly gratified, by the humiliation of an opponent, and the triumph over authority. Thus the passions become engaged, on the side which the sceptic espouses ; sophistry is mistaken for sound logic ; he becomes enamoured of discoveries, made by his superior penetration ; and the singularity of his notions, or principles, which would create doubt and hesitation in a wise man, tends only to strengthen his conviction of their certainty. Milton, describing the character of Belial, one of the fallen angels, says in emphatic language,

----- “ His tongue
 “ Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
 “ The better reason, to perplex and dash
 “ Maturest counsels. ” *

* Paradise Lost, Book II. L. 112.

Does not the philosopher's maxim, said Sophron, "*Nullius jurare in verba magistri,*" seem to recommend a strict scrutiny into every subject? And what more judicious method can be devised, of correcting our prejudices, in favour of any established opinion, than by setting ourselves, boldly, in opposition to it?

Would you free yourself, Sophron, from a trifling malady, by incurring a severe and dangerous one; then, urged Philocles, you may correct a slight prejudice by adopting another that is greater! In our inquiries into truth, we ought to divest ourselves, as much as possible, of every prepossession. But it is surely a reasonable deference, to the judgment of the public, concerning any doctrine or opinion, that we should first examine, with attention, the arguments in its favour, before we admit the objections which may be raised against it. And by this method the mind will
be

be least unfairly biaſſed in her deciſions ; and will reſt on them, with a degree of confidence and ſatiſfaction, which can never reſult from partial or prejudiced inveſtigation. Young men of lively parts and acute underſtandings, when they enter upon the field of controverſy, are ſometimes ſo proud of their polemic ſkill, as to engage, indifcriminately, on any ſide of the queſtion in debate. This is a dangerous practice, and cenſured even by Socrates himſelf ; whoſe labours were devoted to the diſcuſſion of truth, and the detection of error. “ If thou
“ continueſt to take delight in idle argu-
“ mentation,” ſaid he to Euclides, “ thou
“ mayeſt be qualified to combat with
“ the ſophiſts, but wilt never know how
“ to live with men.” And lord Bacon, the great luminary of ſcience, appears to have entertained ſimilar ideas : For, ſpeaking of the logic of Ariſtotle, he terms it, “ a philoſophy for contention
“ only ; but barren in the production
“ of

“ of works, for the benefit of life.”*
 Many lamentable proofs have I seen,
 of the tendency of this habit of alterca-
 tion to create indifference, not only to
 intellectual, but also to moral and reli-
 gious truth. Cato, the cenfor, pro-
 phesied the ruin of the Roman constitu-
 tion, whenever this sort of learning
 should become the fashionable study of
 his countrymen. He conceived his dis-
 like to it on the following occasion.
 “ In the year of Rome 599, the Athe-
 “ nians sent three of their principal phi-
 “ losophers, on an embassy to the re-
 “ public. At the head of these was
 “ Carneades, a very celebrated leader
 “ of the academic sect. While he was
 “ waiting for an answer from the senate,
 “ he employed himself in displaying his
 “ talents in the art of disputation: And
 “ the Roman youth flocked round him,
 “ in great numbers. In one of these
 “ public discourses he attempted to

* Biog. Brit. Vol. I. 2d Edit, p. 449.

“ prove,

“ prove, that *justice, and injustice, depend*
 “ *altogether on the institutions of civil society,*
 “ *and have no foundation in nature.* The
 “ next day, agreeably to the manner of
 “ that sect, and in order to set the argu-
 “ ments on each side of the question in
 “ full view, he supported with equal
 “ eloquence, the reverse of his former
 “ proposition. Cato was present at both
 “ these disputations; and being appre-
 “ hensive that the moral principles of
 “ the Roman youth might be shaken,
 “ if they should become converts to this
 “ mode of philosophising, he was anxious
 “ to prevent its reception; and did not
 “ rest, till he had prevailed with the
 “ senate to dismiss the ambassadors, with
 “ their final answer.” *

Perhaps the versatile opinions and
 principles of the Jesuits may be ascribed
 to this cause; for I have been informed
 by several of them, with whom I have

* *Plut. in Vit. Caton.* Melmoth's Cato, p, 190.

conversed, that their academical exercises are chiefly directed to make them subtle disputants. How far the same observation may be applicable to the members of a learned profession, highly respected in this country, I will not presume to determine. But there is too much reason to apprehend, that the custom of pleading for any client, without discrimination of right or wrong, must lessen the regard due to those important distinctions, and deaden the moral sensibility of the heart.*

I have been too strongly impressed with the love of truth, replied Sophron, to debate with indifference about it; and therefore to guard against deception, from “what the nurse, and what the priest have taught,” I would examine my most serious opinions, and try whether I cannot, by direct opposition, or

* See Appendix, Sect. VII.

by the test of ridicule, invalidate their authority.

I have already given you my reasons against this practice; answered Philocles, and I could enforce them by many examples of the pernicious consequences of it, which have fallen under my observation. But private history is invidious; and I shall therefore confine myself to a few cases of public notoriety. The academy of Dijon, many years ago, proposed the following whimsical prize question, viz. “Whether the sciences may “not be deemed more hurtful, than “beneficial to society?” M. Rousseau became a candidate for the laurel, and assumed the affirmative side of the question; probably because it furnished him with a better opportunity of displaying his genius, and powers of persuasion.*

* *Major est ille qui judicium abstulit, quam qui meruit.* Cic.

*Nescio quomodo, dum lego assentior, cum pesui librum, assensio
mentis illa elabatur.* Idem.

His discourse was received with the highest applause; he became the dupe of his own rhetoric; and adopted as a philosopher, the maxims which he had delivered as an orator. From this period commenced his fame, his paradoxes, and his misfortunes.* He combated the common sense of mankind, with all the zeal of a reformer; and his writings proved like the bubble which glitters, expands, and bursts in the sunshine: They were dazzling, empty, and soon forgotten. I am inclined to suspect that Machiavel's Prince, the Fable of the Bees, and other productions of this nature, originated from causes somewhat similar to those which gave rise to the chimæras of Rousseau. And it is said that a celebrated adversary of Christianity, by yielding up his judgment and imagination to a particular set of

* Helvetius.

arguments, became successively a protestant, a papist, and an infidel.*

But permit me, Sophron, to suggest to you a caution of still higher importance, which regards such of your intellectual pursuits as relate to the Deity. Religion may be considered both as a speculative science, and as a practical principle. In the former view, it constitutes the sublimest object of the understanding, and the most interesting topic of rational investigation. In the latter, it is a spring of motion, and excites all the devout affections of veneration, gratitude, and love. When you contemplate, as a philosopher, the character of the Divine Being, you must be struck with reverence at the proofs, which offer themselves, of his boundless power, universal presence, and infinite duration: And these attributes, reflect-

* See an account of Mr. Tindal, in the *British Biography*, Vol. IX. p. 314.

ing dignity and lustre on the more amiable perfections of his nature, will heighten the impression made by the relation, which he stands in to you, as your Creator, Benefactor, and Friend. Thus the principle of piety will subsist in your mind, in its full force; supported by the authority of reason, and harmonising with all the feelings of your heart. But if you descend, from these general and exalted views of the Divine Being, into minute disquisitions concerning his essence, the freedom of his agency, and other subtleties beyond the human ken, you will soon damp the ardour of devotion in your breast: And should you make these inquiries the common matter of academical disputation, or of familiar debate, the sacred flame will be extinguished altogether.* The poet, lately quoted, has described some of the fallen angels, who had been driven from

* See Dr. Gregory's Comparative View; and Mrs. Barbauld on Devotional Taste.

heaven for impiety and rebellion, as “fitting on a hill retired, and reasoning high”

“ Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
 “ Fix’d fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute ;
 “ And found no end, in wand’ring mazes lost.”*

I mean not, however, to condemn, indiscriminately, all metaphysical researches of this kind. It is natural for men of a speculative turn, to extend their views of theology beyond the clear limits either of reason, or of revelation : And if their inquiries be conducted with that humility and reverence, which such subjects should inspire, they may tend to invigorate the understanding, without depraving the heart. The example of Locke, Newton, Clarke, Hartley, and other distinguished philosophers, affords sufficient confirmation of this truth ; and at the same time evinces a still more pleasing and important one, that Religion numbers, amongst her votaries, men who have dignified and adorned

* Milton’s Paradise Lost, B. II. p 550.

human nature, by their genius, virtue, and learning. I would particularly recommend to your notice, Sophron, I need not say to your imitation, the conduct of Mr. Boyle; who had so profound a veneration for the Deity, that the name of God was never mentioned by him, without a pause in his discourse.* This great philosopher, also, had such delicate notions of veracity, and was so sensible of the imperfection of human knowledge, even when derived from experiment, that in the Preface to his Essays, he makes an apology for the frequent use of the words *perhaps, it seems, 'tis not improbable,* as implying a diffidence of the justness of his opinions: And this diffidence arose, as he informs us, from repeated observation, that what pleased him for a while, was afterwards disgraced by some further, or more recent discovery.

Here Philocles was interrupted by the arrival of a stranger; whose presence put an end to the conversation.

* British Biography, Vol. V. p. 248.

ON THE
INFLUENCE

OF

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

----- VIRESQUE ACQUIRIT EUNDO.

VIRGIL.

----- ANGIT,

IRRITAT, MULCET, FALSIS TERRORIBUS

IMPLET.

HOR. Ep. I. Lib. II.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE INFLUENCE OF

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

SECTION I.

THE laws of HABIT and ASSO-
CIATION form a most important
branch both of physiology, and of ethics.
And, as *the proper study of mankind is man*,
every fact must be deemed interesting,
which tends to elucidate either the ani-
mal, intellectual, or moral œconomy
of his nature. The following observa-
tions have a reference to one or other
of these objects. But no particular re-
gard has been paid to system in the

arrangement of them : And I have attempted only, as lord Verulam expresses it, “ to write certain brief notes, “ set down rather significantly, than “ curiously.”

I. MUSCULAR ACTIONS, perfectly spontaneous, may be excited without apparent volition, so as to become completely automatic, by the recurrence of those impressions, with which they have been long associated. I shall give a striking example of the truth of this proposition.

Several years ago, the countess of — fell into an apoplexy, about seven o'clock in the morning. Amongst other stimulating applications, I directed a feather, dipped in hartshorn, to be frequently introduced into her nostrils. Her ladyship, when in health, was much addicted to the taking of snuff; and the present irritation of the olfactory nerves produced

duced a junction of the fore-finger and thumb, of the right hand; the elevation of them to the nose; and the action of snuffing in the nostrils. When the snuffing ceased, the hand and arm dropped down in a torpid state. A fresh application of the stimulus renewed these successive efforts; and I was a witness to their repetition, till the hartshorn lost its power of irritation, probably by destroying the sensibility of the olfactory nerves. The countess recovered from the fit, about six o'clock in the evening; but, though it was neither long nor severe, her memory never afterwards furnished the least trace of *consciousness* during its continuance.

Does not this instance of a complex series of actions, ordinarily spontaneous, in circumstances which seem to preclude both volition and consciousness, reflect some light on the obscure question, concerning the sleep of the soul, so much

agitated in the time of Mr. Locke? Is not the opinion of this celebrated philosopher confirmed by it, that the perception or contemplation of ideas is to the mind, what motion is to the body, not its essence, but one of its operations: And that an unceasing energy of the understanding and the will, is the sole prerogative of that infinitely perfect Being, who, according to the language of the Psalmist, *never slumbers or sleeps?*

II. Slight PARALYTIC AFFECTIONS of the organs of speech, sometimes occur, without any correspondent disorder in other parts of the body. In such cases, the tongue appears to the patient too large for his mouth, the saliva flows more copiously than usual, and the vibratory power of the *glottis* is somewhat impaired. Hence, the effort to speak succeeds the volition of the mind, slowly and imperfectly; and the words are uttered with faltering and hesitation.

These

These are facts of common notoriety : But I have never seen it remarked, that in this local palsy, the pronounciation of PROPER NAMES is attended with peculiar difficulty ; and that the recollection of them becomes either very obscure, or entirely obliterated ; whilst that of persons, places, things, and even of abstract ideas, remains unchanged. Such a partial defect of memory, of which experience has furnished me with several examples, confirms the theory of affociation, and at the same time admits of an easy solution by it. For, as words are arbitrary marks, and owe their connection with what they import to established usage ; the strength of this connection will be exactly proportioned to the frequency of their recurrence ; and this recurrence must be much more frequent with generic, than with specific terms. Now, proper names are of the latter class ; and the idea of a person or place may remain vivid in the mind, without the least
signature

signature of the appellative, which distinguishes each of them. It is certain, also, that we often think in words; and there is, probably, at such times, some slight impulse on the organs of speech, analogous to what is perceived, when a musical note or tune is called to mind. But a lesion of the power of utterance may break a link in the chain of association, and thus add to the partial defect of memory, now under consideration.

III. Dr. Willis relates the story of an IDEOT, who, residing within the sound of a clock, regularly amused himself with counting aloud the hour of the day, whenever the hammer of that instrument struck: But being afterwards removed to a situation, where there was no clock, he still retained the former impressions so strongly, that he continued to distinguish the ordinary divisions of time, repeating at the end of every hour, the precise number of strokes, which the
clock

clock would have struck at that period.* Mr. Addison has quoted this fact, in one of the Spectators, not from the original, but from Dr. Plott's History of Staffordshire; and has deduced from it many important moral reflections. Whatever may be thought of the authenticity of this narrative, an instance has lately occurred, within the circle of my own observation, somewhat similar, and which no less clearly evinces the power of habit to renew former mechanical impressions, independently of any external cause.

Mr. W—— had been long confined to his chamber, by a palsy, and other ailments. Every evening, about six o'clock, he played at cards with some of the family. He was seized, in June 1780, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with a fit, which terminated in desipency. At the stated hour of card

* Willis *De Anima Brutor*. Pars I. Cap. xvi. pag. 85.

playing, he fancied himself to be engaged in his usual game ; talked of the cards, as if they were in his hand ; and was very angry at his daughter, when she endeavoured to rectify his mistaken imagination. His fatuity was of short continuance ; but when recovered from it, he expressed no recollection of what had passed.

IV. A celebrated French writer has remarked, that “ the greater degree of sagacity any one is master of, the more ORIGINALS will he discover in the characters of mankind.” * This *originality* may doubtless depend on the primary constitution of the mind ; but I am persuaded also, that it is often the result of particular associations. When these are unnatural or inordinate, they produce partial alienations of the understanding : And to this source we may trace the visions of enthusiasm, the perfe-

* Paschal.

cuting zeal of bigotry, the sanguinary honour of duelling, the sordid pursuits of avarice, and the toilsome solitudes of ill-directed ambition. These and numberless other quixotisms of the mind give the phantoms of imagination an ascendancy over reason, and produce a temporary insanity, varying according to its object, degree, and duration. If the predominant train of ideas be foreign to the offices of life, there will be little chance of breaking the magic combination; and the habitual indulgence of this tyranny of passion, or fancy, will, at last, render it fixed and uncontrollable.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
 Are of imagination all compact.
 One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
 That is the madman: The lover, all as frantic,
 Sees Helen's beauty on a brow of Egypt:
 The poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling,
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
 heaven;

And

And as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.

SHAKESPEAR.

But, as Horatio says to Hamlet, “perhaps it may be reasoning too curiously, to reason thus.” At least, we should restrict our conclusions, that they may not involve so large a portion of mankind, as to injure the honour even of human nature itself. Besides, passion is the spring of the mind, which gives vigour and energy to all its movements: And, if not extravagantly disproportionate to the value of its object, it may be indulged, not only with innocence, but sometimes even with singular advantage. For, the ardour inspired by it is the source of all that is excellent in genius, and sublime in conduct: And without the salutary aid of this species of enthusiasm, we should sink into a state of torpid apathy.

But

But, though it be difficult to define the precise boundaries of rationality, it can neither be denied, nor concealed, that partial insanity may subsist with general intelligence; of which the affecting case of Mr. Simon Browne affords a curious example. He was a dissenting clergyman, of exemplary life, and eminent intellectual abilities; but having been seized with melancholy, he desisted from the duties of his function, and could not be persuaded to join in any act, either of public or of private worship. The reason which, after much importunity, he assigned, for this change in his conduct, was, “that he had fallen
 “under the displeasure of God, who
 “had caused his rational soul gradually
 “to perish, and left him only an ani-
 “mal life, in common with brutes:
 “that it was therefore profane in him
 “to pray, and improper to be present
 “at the prayers of others.” In this
 opinion

opinion he remained inflexible, at the time when all the powers of his mind seemed to subsist in full vigour; when his judgment was clear, and his reasoning strong and conclusive. For at this period he published a defence of the *Religion of Nature*, and of the *Christian Revelation*, in answer to *Tindal's Christianity as old as the Creation*: and the work is universally allowed to be the best, which that celebrated controversy produced. But in a dedication of it to queen Caroline, which some of his friends found means to suppress, he displays the very extraordinary phrenzy, under which he laboured. Speaking of himself, he informs her majesty, “ that
“ by the immediate hand of an aveng-
“ ing God, his very thinking substance
“ has, for more than seven years, been
“ continually wasting away, till it is
“ wholly perished out of him, if it be
“ not utterly come to nothing.”

This

This remarkable, and humiliating example of vigour and imbecility, rectitude and perversion of the same understanding, I have related on the authority of Dr. Hawkefworth,* who has preserved the entire copy of the dedication, from which only a brief extract is here made. Our ignorance of the history of Mr. Browne renders it impossible to trace, to its source, this mental malady. But there is reason to presume, that it originated from some strong impression, and subsequent invincible association, connected with, or perhaps producing a change in the organization of the brain. Perhaps, after having acquired an early predilection for the writings of Plato, he might afterwards, in some season of hypochondriacal dejection, fall into the gloomy mysticism of the later followers of that amiable philosopher: For Plotinus, who flourished in the third century

* See the Adventurer.

after the Christian æra, taught that the most perfect worship of the Deity consists, not in acts of veneration, or of gratitude, but in a certain self-annihilation, or total extinction of the intellectual faculties.*

I am inclined to believe, that the celebrated M. Paschal laboured under a species of insanity, towards the conclusion of his life, similar to that of Mr. Simon Browne. And, having hazarded such a surmise, it is incumbent on me to shew, on what it is founded. This very extraordinary man discovered the most astonishing marks of genius in his childhood; and his progress in science was so rapid, that at the age of sixteen, he wrote an excellent treatise of Conic Sections. He possessed such a capacious and retentive memory, that he is said “never to have forgotten any thing which

* See Collier's Hist. Dict. Also Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Discoveries, page 397.

he had learned." And it was his practice, to digest and arrange in his mind, a whole series of reflections, before he committed them to writing. This power was at once so accurate and extensive, that he has been heard to deliver the entire plan of a work, of which he had taken no notes, in a continued narration, that occupied several hours. But it is related, by the editor of his *Thoughts on Religion and other Subjects*,* "that it pleased GOD so to touch his heart, as to let him perfectly understand, that the Christian religion obligeth us to live for GOD only, and to propose to ourselves no other object." In consequence of this persuasion, he renounced all the pursuits of knowledge, and practised the most severe and rigorous mortifications; living in the greatest penury, and refusing every indulgence, which was not absolutely

* See the Preface to that work.

necessary for the support of life. It appears from some of his pious meditations, that this resolution of mind proceeded from the visitation of sickness. And the following solemn addressees to the Deity clearly indicate an imagination perverted by the most erroneous associations.

“ O LORD, thou gavest me health to
 “ be spent in serving thee, and I applied
 “ it to an use altogether profane. Now
 “ thou hast sent sickness for my correc-
 “ tion.—I know, O LORD, that at the
 “ instant of my death, I shall find my-
 “ self entirely separated from the world,
 “ stripped naked of all things, standing
 “ alone before thee, to answer to thy
 “ justice concerning all the motions of
 “ my thoughts, and spirits. Grant that
 “ I may look on myself as dead already,
 “ separated from the world, stripped of
 “ all the objects of my passion, and
 “ placed alone in thy presence.—I praise
 “ thee,

“ thee, O GOD, that thou hast been
 “ pleased to anticipate the dreadful day,
 “ by already destroying all things to my
 “ taste and thoughts, under this weak-
 “ nefs, which I suffer from thy provi-
 “ dence. I praise thee, that thou hast
 “ given me this divorce from the plea-
 “ fures of the world.” Was it confo-
 nant with foundness of understanding,
 for a man to take a sudden disgust at all
 the liberal studies, and innocent en-
 joyments, which had before engaged
 and gratified his mind? And was it not
 as much the fiction of a distempered
 fancy, that GOD enjoined poverty, absti-
 nence, and ignorance, to one possessing
 rank, fortune, and the noblest endow-
 ments of the mind, as the belief of
 Simon Browne, that he was divested
 of that rationality, which at the same
 time he so eminently displayed? When-
 ever false ideas, of a practical kind,
 are so firmly united, as to be constantly,
 and invariably mistaken for truths, we

very justly denominate this unnatural alliance INSANITY. And, if it give rise to a train of subordinate wrong affociations, producing incongruity of behaviour, incapacity for the common duties of life, or unconscious deviations from morality and religion, MADNESS has then its commencement.

In the foregoing examples, the force of habit and affociation is clearly manifest. And man, whilst under the influence of their authority, however despotic or perverted, still retains a capacity for action and enjoyment, though he ceases to be a rational or moral agent. But the suspension of their operation stops at once all the movements of the mind, and seems to annihilate every energy of the understanding, the affections, and the will. On the 25th of October 1778, a sea-faring person, about forty years of age, was recommended as a patient to the LUNATIC ASYLUM in York.

York.* During his abode in the hospital, he was never observed to express any desire for sustenance, or to shew any preference of it to his medicines. The first six weeks after his admission, he was fed in the manner of an infant. A servant undressed him at night, and dressed him in the morning; after which, he was conducted to his seat in the common parlour, where he remained all day, with his body bent, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. Every thing was indifferent to him, and he was regarded by all about him, as an animal converted nearly into a vegetable. In this state of insensibility he remained five years and six months. But, on the 14th of May 1782, on his entrance into the parlour, he saluted the convalescents with the words *Good morrow to you all*. He then thanked the servants of the house, in the most affectionate

* This case was lately transmitted to me, by my friend Dr. Hunter of York, to be communicated to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester. I have given only an abridgment of it.

manner, for their tendernefs to him, of which he had begun to be fenfible fome weeks before, but till then, had not refolution to exprefs his gratitude. A few days after this unexpected recovery, he was permitted to write a letter to his wife, in which he expreffed himfelf with becoming propriety. At this time, he feemed to take peculiar pleasure in the enjoyment of the open air, and in his walks converfed with freedom and ferenity. On making enquiry concerning what he felt, during the fufpention of his intellectual and fenfitive powers, he replied, that his mind had been *totally loft*; but that, about two months before his full reftoration to himfelf, he began to have thoughts and fenfations, which, at firft, ferved only to excite in him fears and apprehenfions, efpecially in the night-time. On the 28th of May 1782, he returned to his family; and has now the command of a fhip employed in the Baltic trade.

SECTION II.

I. IT is highly instructive, as well as curious, to contemplate the progressive influence of particular associations on the affections and the judgment, as they gradually acquire the force of habit by time, and vividness by frequent renewal. Dr. Swift, in a letter to lord Bolingbroke, dated 1729, expresses himself in the following terms. “ I remember, when I was a little boy, I felt
“ a great fish at the end of my line,
“ which I drew up almost on the ground,
“ but it dropt in, and the disappointment
“ vexes me to this very day, and, I believe,
“ it was the type of all my future
“ disappointments.”

This little incident, perhaps, gave the first wrong bias to a mind, predisposed
to

to such impressions; and by operating with so much strength and permanency, it might possibly lay the foundation of the Dean's subsequent peevishness, passion, misanthropy, and final insanity. The quickness of his sensibility furnished a sting to the slightest disappointment; and pride festered those wounds, which self-government would instantly have healed. As children couple hobgoblins with darkness, every contradiction of his humour, every obstacle to his preferment, was, by him, associated with ideas of malignity and evil. By degrees, he acquired a contempt of human nature, and a hatred of mankind, which, at last, terminated in the total abolition of his rational faculties.

This is no exaggerated picture, and we have the Dean's own authority for its accuracy. "The chief end," says he, in a letter to Mr. Pope, "I propose to vex
" myself in all my labours, is to vex
" the world, rather than divert it; and,
" if

“ if I could compass that design, without
 “ hurting my own person or fortune, I
 “ would be the most indefatigable writer
 “ you have ever seen. I have ever hated
 “ all nations, professions, and communi-
 “ ties; and all my love is towards indi-
 “ viduals. For instance, I hate the tribe
 “ of lawyers, but I love Counsellor such
 “ a one, and Judge such a one: 'Tis so
 “ with physicians, (I will not speak of my
 “ own trade) soldiers, English, Scotch,
 “ French, and the rest. But principally
 “ I hate and detest that animal called
 “ man, although I heartily love John,
 “ Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is
 “ the system upon which I have governed
 “ myself many years, (but do not tell)
 “ and so I shall go on, till I have done
 “ with them.”*

This letter is not written in a strain, which will suffer the most indulgent

* Pope's Works, Vol. IX. Lett. 2.

critic to ascribe it to jocularitv. And in the epitaph, which the Dean composed for himself long afterwards, and which is inscribed on his monument in the cathedral of St. Patrick's, he has left a solemn, and decisive memorial of his misanthropy.

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS

JONATHAN SWIFT, S. T. P.

UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO

ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT,

&c.

The strongest tint, in the complexion of the human character, may be sometimes formed by a circumstance, or event apparently casual; which, by forcibly impressing the mind, produces a lasting association, that gives an uniform direction to the efforts of the understanding, and the feelings of the heart.

Dr. Conyers Middleton, one of the most learned, various, and elegant writers

ters of the present age, is said to have been much more addicted, in the early part of his life, to music, than to science. But he was roused from his favourite amusement, and stimulated to the closest application to study, by a sarcasm of his rival and enemy, the celebrated Dr. Bentley, who stigmatized him with the name of fidler.* And indignation made him eager to convince the Doctor and the world, that he could *write* as well as *fiddle*; a conviction, of which his opponent had, afterwards, the most painful experience.†

The author of the *Night Thoughts*, a poem which contains the tenderest touches of nature and passion, and the sublimest truths of morality and religion, intermixed with frivolous conceits, turgid obscurities, and gloomy views of human life, wrote that work under the

* Gent. Mag. 1773, page 387.

† Brit. Biograph. Vol. IX.

recent pressure of sorrow, for the loss of his wife, and of a son and daughter-in-law, whom he loved with paternal tenderness. These several events happened within the short period of three months, as appears from the following apostrophe to death.

Infatiate archer! could not *one* suffice?

Thy shaft flew *thrice*; and *thrice* my peace was slain;
And *thrice*, e'er *thrice* yon moon had fill'd her horns.*

But, though time alleviated this distress, his mind acquired from it a tincture of melancholy, which continued through life; and cast a sable hue even on his very amusements. The like disposition, also, discovered itself in his rural improvements. He had an alcove in his garden, so painted as to seem, at a distance, furnished with a bench or seat, which invited to repose; and when, upon

* Night Thoughts.

a nearer approach, the deception was perceived, this motto at the same time presented itself to the eye,

Invisibilia non decipiunt.

The things unseen do not deceive us.*

The following witty allusion bears the marks of a similar turn of thought. The Doctor paid a visit to Archbishop Potter's son, then Rector of Chiddingstone, near Tunbridge. This gentleman lived in a country, where the roads were deep and miry; and when Dr. Young, after some danger and difficulty, arrived at his house, he enquired, "Whose field is that which I have crossed?" "It is mine," answered his friend. "True," said the Poet, "*Potter's field, to bury strangers in.*" †

* Brit. Biograph. Vol. IX.

† Vid. Gent. Mag. July 1781, page 319.

II. It is a very important office of education to guard the understanding against the union of ideas, which have no natural or proper connection. Yet this object is less attended to than any other; and we often find men distinguished for genius, erudition, and even strength of mind, warped by the false conceptions, and governed by the prejudices of puerility. Credulousness is the concomitant of the first stages of life; and is indeed the principle on which all instruction must be founded: But it lays the mind open to impressions of error, as well as of truth: And, when suffered to combine itself with that passion for the marvellous, which all children discover, it fosters the rankest weeds of chimera and superstition; rooting firmly in the mind, *all that the nurse, and all the priest have taught*. Hence, the awful solemnity of *darkness visible*, and of what the Poet has denominated *a dim religious light*; together with the terrors of evil omens,

omens, of haunted places, and of ghastly spectres. The energy and beauty of the following lines depend on the universal prevalence of these early acquired ideas.

I am thy father's spirit ;
 Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
 And for the day confin'd to fast in fires ;
 Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
 Are burnt and purg'd away. But, that I am forbid
 To tell the secrets of my prison house,
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young
 blood,
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
 spheres,
 Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine :
 But this eternal blazon must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood.*

History presents us with few characters superior to those of Henry the fourth, of France, and his prime minister the duke

* Shakespear's Hamlet.

of Sully. But notwithstanding the wisdom, knowledge, and discernment of these great men, they appear, on several occasions, to have been actuated, by their juvenile associations, in favour of astrology. What can be more foreign to the events of human life; what less adapted to excite fear or hope in the mind of an intelligent man, than the aspect of a distant star, or the variegated lines of his hand? Yet Sully confesses, that an early prepossession had made him weak enough to give credit to predictions, derived from this fanciful origin. And though he informs us that the king, his master, was of opinion, religion ought to inspire a contempt of such prophecies, the conversation which he relates, at the same time, evidently betrays Henry's confidence in them. This matter is put beyond dispute by an incident, which occurred soon after the birth of the Dauphin; the particulars of which I shall

shall recite, from the memoirs of this excellent writer.

* “ La Riviere was the king’s first physician, a man who had little more religion than those generally possess, who blend it with judicial astrology. Henry already felt a tenderness for his son, which filled him with an eager anxiety to know his fate: And having heard that La Riviere succeeded wonderfully in his predictions, he commanded him to calculate the Dauphin’s nativity, with all the cere-

* It should seem that astrology was considered, formerly, as an essential part of the learning of a physician; for Chaucer, in the prologue to his Canterbury tales, has thus characterised him.

With us there was a doctor of physik,
 In al the worlde was ther non hym lyk,
 To speke of physik and of furgerye;
 For he was groundit in astronomy.
 He kept his pacient a ful gret del
 In hourys by his magyk naturel;
 Wel couth he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his ymagys for his pacient.

“ monials of art. To aid this business,
“ he had carefully sought for the most
“ accurate watch, which could be pro-
“ cured; that the precise moment of
“ the prince’s birth might be exactly
“ ascertained. About a fortnight after-
“ wards, the king and Sully being alone
“ together, their conversation turned
“ upon the prediction of the astrologer,
“ La Brosse, concerning his majesty.
“ This renewed Henry’s solicitude, with
“ respect to his son; and he ordered
“ La Riviere to be called. ‘ Monsieur
“ La Riviere,’ said the king, ‘ what
“ have you discovered, relative to the
“ Dauphin’s destiny.’ ‘ I had begun my
“ calculations,’ replied Riviere, ‘ but
“ I left them unfinished, not caring to
“ amuse myself any longer with a science,
“ which I have always believed to be,
“ in some degree, criminal.’ The king,
“ dissatisfied with this answer, com-
“ manded his physician to speak freely,
“ and without concealment, on pain of
“ his

“ his displeasure. La Riviere suffered
 “ himself to be pressed still longer; but
 “ at last, with an air of apparent dis-
 “ content, he delivered himself in the
 “ following terms. ‘ Sire, your son will
 “ complete the common period of human
 “ life, and will reign longer than you
 “ shall do: But his turn of mind will
 “ be widely different from yours; he
 “ will be obstinate in opinion, often
 “ governed by his own whims, and
 “ sometimes by those of others. Under
 “ his administration it will be safer to
 “ think, than to speak. Impending
 “ ruin threatens your former society.
 “ He will perform great exploits, be
 “ fortunate in his designs, and make a
 “ distinguished figure in Europe. There
 “ will be a vicissitude of peace and war
 “ in his time. He will have children,
 “ and after his death affairs will grow
 “ worse and worse. This is all you
 “ can know from me,’ concluded La
 “ Riviere, ‘ and more than I had re-

“ solved to tell you.’ His majesty, and
 “ the duke of Sully, remained a long
 “ time together, making reflections on
 “ the words of the astrologer, which left
 “ a strong impression on the mind of the
 “ king.”

III. LUDICROUS ASSOCIATIONS, not founded in truth or nature, are peculiarly unfavourable to the principles and practice of virtue and religion. Reason, especially during the period of youth, affords but a feeble barrier against the attacks of ridicule; and the mind that is enslaved by its influence, may be so far deluded or depraved, as to lose the susceptibility of good impressions, or to contemplate the most amiable moral affections with derision, shame, and even disgust.

----- Here subdued
 By frontless laughter, and the hardy scorn
 Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject soul
 With blushes half resigns the candid praise

Of temperance, and honour; half disowns
 A free man's hatred of tyrannic pride;
 And hears with sickly smiles the venal mouth,
 With foulest licence, mock the patriot's name.*

The celebrated Dr. Pitcairn was no less distinguished for wit than learning. It is recorded, that, as he passed one day along the streets, he beheld the affecting spectacle of a mason, killed by the fall, and buried in the ruins, of a chimney, which he had just completed. "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord," said he, "for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Such a humourous conjunction of resembling yet incongruous ideas, probably stifled, in his breast, the sentiments of compassion. And I have been informed by a very humane friend, that on the relation of a melancholy event, similar in its circumstances, the recollection of this ludicrous remark substituted, in his mind,

* Akenfide's Pleasures of Imagination, Book III.

emotions of laughter, for those of commiseration.

The natural propensity of Dean Swift led him to the indulgence of this species of drollery, very much to the prejudice of every finer feeling of the heart. In one of his letters, he laments the mortal illness of his amiable friend Arbuthnot; but mixes, with his expressions of sorrow, certain whimsical reflections, which convert his mourning into grimace. “There is a passage in Bede,” says he to Mr. Pope, “highly commending the piety
 “and learning of the Irish, in that age;
 “where, after abundance of praises, he
 “overthrows them all, by lamenting,
 “that, alas! they kept Easter at a wrong
 “time of the year. So our Doctor has
 “every quality and virtue, that can make
 “a man amiable or useful; but, *alas!*
 “he hath *a sort of slouch in his walk*. I
 “pray God protect him, for he is an
 “excellent

“excellent Christian, though not a catholic.”*

When the mind has been long habituated to the assemblage of ludicrous ideas, they recur on very improper occasions, not only spontaneously, but even in despite of every effort of the judgment and the will. In this state, elevation of thought, and dignity of character, are unattainable; and seriousness, when assumed, is always marked with some glaring and risible inconsistency. Swift, in his last testament, bequeaths three old hats, and other still more trifling and absurd legacies, with farcical solemnity; and the celebrated Hogarth could not help displaying traits of humour, in his gravest historical paintings. I have heard it remarked by one, who was sometimes the companion of his walks, that he would interrupt the most interesting conversation, to laugh at any oddity,

* Pope's Works, Vol. IX. Lett. 11.

which presented itself; and that his eyes were constantly cast about, in search of objects singular and diverting. When a man, of this turn, applies himself to books, it is not instruction or rational criticism, but hilarity, that is his pursuit: And he finds food for his prevailing appetite, equally palatable, both in the beauties and the blemishes of his author. For Tully has well observed, that the *verbum ardens*, the glowing boldness of expression, which sublimity of sentiment inspires, may be easily rendered ludicrous, by an illiberal paraphrase. Even entire productions, of some of the best writers, have been thus misrepresented and deformed, for the purpose of merriment, under the title of travesties. And the bulk of mankind are readily deceived into the belief, that what gives rise to laughter is in itself ridiculous. For this reason, a reader of sensibility, who has the interest of virtue and religion at heart, will peruse, with pain and disgust, the

*Meditations on a Broom-stick, written according to the stile and manner of the Honourable Robert Boyle.** “To what a
 “height,” says lord Orrery, “must the
 “spirit of sarcasm arise in an author,
 “who could prevail upon himself to
 “ridicule such a man as Mr. Boyle!
 “But the sword of wit, like the scythe
 “of time, cuts down friend and foe, and
 “attacks every thing that accidentally
 “lies in its way.” It must be confessed,
 however, that this great and good philosopher has indulged, in his theological writings, certain conceits, which will draw a smile from his warmest admirers. A zeal to promote the habit of pious and moral reflections has, sometimes, tempted him to force ideas into the most unnatural alliance; and to deduce very important analogies, from objects or circumstances, not only incongruous, but low and contemptible. Thus, from the

* Swift's Works, Vol. V. p. 372.

stumbling of a horse, in a good road, he infers the danger of prosperity; from being let blood in a fever, he justifies the wisdom of the Deity, in depriving his creatures of spiritual superfluities; and from a distaste of the syrups, prescribed by his physician, he concludes, that the good things of life are not objects of envy, because not always relished as enjoyments. But I feel a reluctance to point out such trivial exuberances, in the works of Mr. Boyle. It is ungenerous to injure the well earned wreath of laurel, which he wears, by fastidiously culling a few solitary leaves, that are withered. We should remember also, that dignity and meanness, grace and vulgarity, have, in many instances, no fixed standard; and are dependent on certain accessory associations, which vary in different countries, at different periods of time, and with different persons even of the same age and place. Jacob is represented, in the holy Scriptures, as
calling

calling his sons together, before his death, to deliver to each of them his benediction. And in the language of metaphor and prophecy, he says, *Iffachar is a strong afs, couching down between two burdens*: From which it appears, that this animal was not then regarded as a symbol of stupidity and insignificance. Ajax, retreating between two armies, is compared, by Homer, to the lion for undaunted courage, and to the afs for fullen and unyielding slowness.* But Mr. Pope, in his translation, has omitted the latter allusion, to accommodate his work to the state of modern opinion. The same sublime poet exhibits the awful uncertainty of victory, in the engagement between the Greeks and Trojans, by the image of a poor woman, weighing wool in a pair of scales. And Eustathius says, it was a tradition, that Homer derived this simile from the occupation of his mother, who main-

* II. Lib. XI.

tained herself by fuch manual labour.* But a ftill more remarkable comparifon occurs, in the writings of this ancient bard. For Ulyffes, tossing about through the whole night, with reftlefs anxiety, is likened to a fat pudding, frying on the fire.† Even Virgil, whose elegance and correftnefs are univerfally acknowledged, has drawn the fimilitude of a queen (Amata the wife of king Latinus) under the violence of paffion, from a company of boys whipping a top.‡

I do not recollect one coarfe allufion, or low image in the whole poem of *Paradife Loft*; though feveral, contained in it, are fantaftical, being derived from the fictions of heathen mythology. But it is more than probable that Milton, when tranflated by foreigners, will not appear to deferve the character of un-

* See the Notes of Dacier, Pope, and other Commentators.

† Od. Lib. XXI.

‡ Æn. Lib. VII.

deviating dignity. For the correspondent terms, in other languages, may have secondary ideas of meanness affixed to them, from which, in the original, they are exempt. The same remark is applicable to other works; and it is particularly to be wished, that the books of the Old and New Testament, in the common version, were always perused with a candid attention to it.

I have been told of a picture, which exhibits a burlesque view of the tablature, representing the judgment of Hercules. The young Hero is painted as a tall grenadier, Virtue as a methodist preacher, and Pleasure as a drunken strumpet. The parody, if this term can be applied to painting, may answer the purpose of exciting laughter, but will counteract, in the spectator's mind, all the beneficial effects of the most instructive and philosophical apologue of antiquity.

*Discit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur.*

HOR.

PARODY is a favourite flower both of ancient and of modern literature.* It is a species of ludicrous composition, which derives its wit from association; and never fails to produce admiration and delight, when it unites taste in selection, with felicity of application. Even licentious specimens of it move to laughter; for we are always inclined to be diverted with mimickry, or ridiculous imitation, whether the original be an object of respect, of indifference, or of contempt. A polished Athenian audience heard, with bursts of mirthful applause, the discourses of the venerable Socrates, burlesqued upon the stage; and no Englishman can read the Rehearsal without smiling at the medley of borrowed absurdities, which it exhibits.

* See Diog. Laertius, Lucian. Dialog. Boileau, Cervantes, Butler, Swift, &c. &c.

Mr. Pope's *Dunciad*, and *Rape of the Lock* abound with the most admirable parodies; but some of them may appear, to a religious mind, chargeable with levity and profaneness. I shall quote an example, both of the excellent and exceptionable; as the beauty of the one, and the fault of the other, equally relate to the subject of the present essay.

When the fatal rape was committed by the Baron, on Belinda's Lock, she is represented as attempting to revenge herself by her bodkin.

Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
 And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
 The same, his ancient personage to deck,
 Her great great grandfire wore about his neck,
 In three seal rings; which after, melted down,
 Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
 Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
 The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
 Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
 Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.*

* Canto V. line 87.

The unlearned reader will be struck with this splendid, genealogical description of an insignificant bodkin: But he, who is versed in the writings of Homer, will peruse it with additional delight, from the recollection of the analogy, which it bears to the progress of Agamemnon's sceptre. In the third Canto, of the incomparable poem above referred to, a game of Ombre is described with all the *pathos* and solemnity, which the heroic muse can call forth: And the cards in Belinda's hand being pompously enumerated, viz.

----- Four kings, in majesty rever'd,
 With hoary whiskers, and a forky beard :
 And four fair queens, whose hands sustain a flow'r,
 Th' expressive emblem of their softer power, &c.

the two following lines succeed ;

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care,
Let Spades be trumps ! she said ; and trumps they were.

This parody of one of the most sublime passages in the Old Testament,

“ and

“and GOD said, *Let there be light, and there was light,*” may, I think, be justly deemed reprehensible; as it tends to connect a ludicrous idea with that Being, who ought never to be thought of, but with reverence.* But should this remark appear to be an overstrained refinement, it will be acknowledged that, in less

* Pope seems to have been peculiarly fond of allusions to this passage, of the Old Testament; but has been a little unfortunate in the application of them. The truth is, that the sentiment is too sublime, either for burlesque, or for compliment. And the extravagance of these lines, in his epitaph on Sir Isaac Newton, offends almost equally with the parody quoted above.

Nature, and Nature's laws lay hid in night;
 GOD said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light.

This hyperbolic encomium is such a profanation of sacred writ, to monumental flattery, that it was justly satirized in the following epigram, written by a young man, who has disclosed only the initials of his name.

If Newton's existence enlighten'd the whole,
 What part of expansion inhabits the fool?
 If light had been total, as Pope hath averr'd,
 I. T. had been right, for he could not have err'd:
 But Pope has his faults, so excuse a young spark;
 Bright Newton's deceas'd, and we're all in the dark.

dignified cases, very slight associations, of the burlesque kind, have an astonishing effect on the sentiments and taste of those who form them. When Thomson's tragedy of Sophonisba was first represented on the stage, the highest expectations were formed of its theatrical merit. But a waggish parody on the following line,

O! Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!

damned the reputation of the play; and for a while the town echoed with

O! Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, O!*

It happened not long since, that a person of mean rank was elected provost, or chief magistrate, of Aberdeen. In the first moments of elevation, and

* Johnson's Lives of the Poets; Article, Thomson.

This celebrated critic, in another part of the same work, has well observed, that exclamations seldom succeed in our language: And that the particle O! used at the beginning of a sentence, always offends.

whilst

whilst receiving the congratulations of his friends, he laid his hands upon his breast, and very emphatically declared, that “*after all he was but a mortal man.*”

Is it possible for any one, under the impression of this ludicrous story, to read, without smiling, the fact related by Ælian, and quoted with great applause by many other historians, viz. that Philip, king of Macedon, kept a person in his service, whose office it was to deliver to him, daily, the following admonition; *Remember, Philip, that thou art mortal?* Perhaps, if such an incident had occurred in Greece, during the reign of that monarch, it might have turned into ridicule the admiration, in which his institution was held; by exposing, at once, the absurdity, pride, and affected humility, on which it was founded.

The people improperly, because opprobriously, called Quakers, certainly merit

a very high degree of esteem from their fellow citizens, on account of their industry, temperance, peaceableness, and catholic spirit of charity. For notwithstanding the enthusiastic pretensions of their founders, to superior sanctity and Divine inspiration, they disclaimed all dominion over faith and conscience. And Barclay, their learned apologist, wrote ably in defence of religious liberty; whilst Penn, as a lawgiver and civil magistrate, established it, on the broadest foundation, in his new government of Pennsylvania.* At a period, when bigotry and persecution were predominant through the Christian world, such

rational

* This venerable man was suspected of being a papist in disguise, owing to the favour shewn him by king James II. To obviate so unjust an opinion, several letters were written by him to Dr. Tillotson, then dean of Canterbury, who, amongst others, had adopted it; and in one of them he thus expresses himself. "I know not a jesuit or a priest in the world: And yet I am a catholic, though not a Roman, "I have bowels for mankind, and dare not deny others, "what I crave for myself, I mean, liberty for the exercise of
" my

rational sentiments and liberal conduct reflect the highest honour on this sect. But the singularity of their apparel, manners, and forms of worship, has exposed them to the keenest shafts of ridicule. And however illiberally and unjustifiably such offensive weapons may have been employed, they would, in all probability, have prevailed, if the converts and youth of this sect had not been fortified against them, by the most unremitting strictness of their institutions. These are admirably calculated to correct, or to prevent, all ludicrous associations; and to suppress, if possible, the very principle of laughter, as inconsistent with the *seriousness, gravity, and*

“ my religion; thinking faith, piety, and providence, a better
 “ security than force; and that, when truth cannot prevail
 “ with her own weapons, all others will fail her.---I am no
 “ Roman Catholic, but a Christian, whose creed is the
 “ Scripture, of the truth of which I hold a nobler evidence,
 “ than the best church authority in the world.”

Brit. Biog. Vol. VII.

*godly fear of the Gospel.** It is astonishing to observe, in a large body of people, the efficacy of a set of practical maxims, utterly repugnant to nature: And the influence of them is early visible, even in their children; who display an invincible steadiness of countenance and deportment, under circumstances which cover others, of the same age, but differently educated, with the blushes of bashful confusion. But there is now an increasing relaxation of discipline amongst the members of this respectable community; and their distinguishing modes will gradually cease, as they become more and more combined with the painful ideas of obloquy and derision, in the minds of those who adopt them.

Piety to God, whether it respects the inward sentiments and affections of the soul, or the outward expressions of them in homage and prayer, ought to elevate

* Barclay's Apology for the Quakers, p. 136.

us far above the reach of raillery, or the influence of low and ludicrous associations. But unhappily, both the principle and practice of devotion are too often debased by superstition, deformed by enthusiasm, and counterfeited by hypocrisy: And as these constitute legitimate objects of ridicule and contempt, the sterling value of piety itself becomes depreciated by the union of a base and foreign alloy. Such numbers *draw near to the Deity with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from him*, that a noble writer has sarcastically observed, “ If we are told a man is religious, we still ask, what are his morals? “ But if we hear at first that he has honest “ morals, and is a man of natural justice “ and good temper, we seldom think of “ the other question, whether he be “ religious and devout?”* These are considerations, which operate powerfully on the mind: And if they be strengthened by the ideas of ungraceful gestures,

* Lord Shaftsbury’s Characteristics.

dissonant tones of voice, or other extravagancies in devotion, such a degree of timidity and false delicacy may be created, as entirely to depress the fervour, which these exercises are adapted to excite. Prayer may then be performed as a duty, but will not be felt as a privilege; and the creature will even blush at the highest honour he can enjoy, that of holding communion with his Creator. Many an ingenuous youth has been despoiled of this glorious distinction of humanity, by the sneers and jests of his companions: And of the military profession it is said, that an officer would rather face the mouth of a cannon, than be found privately in the posture of supplication. Dr. Swift seems to have been governed, in his religious observances, by some such ill-grounded association. His constant presence at church, whilst he resided at the deanery of St. Patrick's, he knew would be expected; but he was sedulously careful to conceal whatever

whatever had the appearance of voluntary devotion. When he was in London, therefore, he never attended divine service, but at a very early hour in the morning. And though he practised family prayer in his house, his servants assembled, as it were, by stealth; so that Dr. Delany lived six months with him, before he discovered it.*

I hope it will not be understood, from what has been advanced on the topic of ludicrous associations, that I am averse to laughter, or an enemy to wit and pleasantry. Human life, without their exhilarating influence, would be a scene

* Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII. Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Article Swift.

Dr. Swift furnishes an excellent subject for the moral anatomist. His life was eventful; his passions were various and strong; and his sensibilities acute in the extreme. Self-indulgence gave every spring to action, within him, its full power; and pride prevented the concealment of its operation. Hence the motives, which directed his conduct, were seldom either extraneous or complex; and they are generally easy to be traced to their source.

of anxious care, or phlegmatic dulness. Nor is the harsher controul of ridicule to be wholly condemned or rejected. It is necessary to restrain the irregular fallies of folly; and, as these often proceed from a lively imagination, the sense of it is happily acutest, where its correction is most required.

IV. There are few people, who have not, at particular seasons, experienced the effect of certain accidental associations, which obtrude one impertinent idea, or set of ideas, on the mind, to the exclusion of every other. Mr. Locke has noticed this weakness, and he humourously describes it, “as a childishness
 “of the understanding, wherein, during
 “the fit, it plays with and dandles some
 “insignificant puppet, without any end
 “in view.”* Thus, a tune, a proverb,

* Locke's Conduct of the Understanding.

a scrap of poetry, or some other trivial object, will steal into the thoughts, and continue to possess them long after it ceases to be amusing. Persuasives to dismiss a guest that proves so troublesome, can hardly be necessary; and bodily exertion is generally the best remedy for this mental infirmity. But there is another state of mind, dependent on the laws of association, which is more dangerous, because it invites to indulgence. It consists in reveries, gay visions of fancy, the creation of air-built castles, and cobweb *hypotheses*. Men of genius alone are incident to these flattering delusions; and they too often implicitly give way to them. But in proportion as they prevail, reason and judgment are impaired; study becomes formal dullness; activity toilsome; and the necessary offices of life are neglected. Thomson has thus beautifully pictured such a character.

There

There was a man of ſpecial grave remark ;
 A certain tender gloom o'erſpread his face,
 Penſive, not ſad, in thought involv'd, not dark ;
 As ſweet this wight could ſing as morning lark,
 And teach the nobleſt morals of the heart :
 But theſe his talents were y' buried ſtark.

To noon-tide ſhades incontinent he ran,
 Where purls the brook with ſleep inviting ſound,
 There would he linger till the lateſt ray
 Of light ſat trembling on the welkin's bound.
 Oft as he travers'd the cœrulean field,
 And mark'd the clouds, that drove before the
 wind,
 Ten thouſand glorious ſystems would he build,
 Ten thouſand great ideas fill'd his mind ;
 But with the clouds they fell, and left no trace
 behind.*

V. It has been remarked, that gameſters, failors, and others, who are under the influence of what is vulgarly, but very improperly, termed *chance*, that is, of cauſes not within the reach of human power to direct, nor of human ſagacity

* Thomſon's *Caſtle of Indolence*, Canto I.

to discern, are extremely prone to superstition. Their hopes and fears, their confidence and despair, are founded on circumstances, which bear only a fanciful relation to the events, that are to come. Imagination connects the ideas of magnitude and importance with the slightest causes, which are viewed in obscurity; as objects appear largest to our senses during twilight. A gamester lays great stress on the luck of a feat, or the shake of a die: And I remember, in crossing a ferry, whilst it was very calm, the boatman whistled more than three hours a particular set of notes, to forward the motion of his vessel, crying out, at short intervals, *Blow, good wind, blow; blow a brisk gale!* And if a gentle gale sprung up, he redoubled his efforts, in the fullest assurance of success. The absolute trust, reposed in empirical medicines, arises from a similar deception; and the miraculous operation, often ascribed to them, even by persons of judgment and education,

education, is a proof of the astonishing power of wrong associations. The wise emperor Marcus Aurelius was so firmly persuaded of the efficacy of a certain antidote, called *theriaca*, to resist every species of poison, that he made use of it daily, to the great injury of his health. For his head became affected to such a degree, that he dozed in the midst of business; and when opium was left out of the composition, an obstinate watchfulness ensued.*

The same principle of association explains the dogmatism of the critic, and the antiquarian; whose positiveness, respecting the construction of a sentence, or the letters of a worn-out inscription, is often in exact proportion to their uncertainty. When any one soars, with great ardour, into the regions of conjecture, the airy phantoms, which he meets with, will be contemplated by

* Galen de Antidotis, Lib. I. C. 1.

him as substantial realities : And he will pursue truth, not with a temperate and rational zeal, but with the blind enthusiasm of love ; dignifying, like a passionate *inamorato*, every conceit of his mind, and admiring discoveries which exist no where, but in his own brain. These reflections have been, in part, suggested by the perusal of the memoirs of Mr. Whiston ; a man, whose genius, learning, and integrity, might have placed him high in the scale of excellence, had he not suffered a perverted imagination to usurp the just authority of judgment. “ The warmth of his temper disposed
“ him to receive any sudden thoughts,
“ any thing, that struck his fancy, when
“ favourable to his preconceived scheme
“ of things, or to any new schemes of
“ things, which served, in his opinion,
“ a religious purpose.”* With such propensities he wrote *An Essay on the Revelation of St. John* : And being appointed,

* Mr. Collins.

the following year (1707), to preach Mr. Boyle's lectures, he chose for his subject, the *accomplishment of Scripture prophecies*. In 1712, when prince Eugene of Savoy was in England, he dedicated a work to him, in which *he interpreted the end of the hour, and day, and month, and year, for the Ottoman devastations, Apoc. 9.15. to have been put by his glorious victory over the Turks, September 1, 1697. O. S. or the succeeding peace of Carlowitz, 1698.** His favourite conceptions were now so strongly rivetted in his mind, that he discerned clearly all the revolutions of past and future ages, in the writings of the Prophets, or the revelations of St. John. Such indeed was the ascendancy of these absurd associations over his understanding, that he gave entire credit to the impudent imposture of Mary Tofts,

* Prince Eugene seems to have been pleased with the honour of the discovery, that he was the object of so ancient a prediction; for he presented Mr. Whiston, on this occasion, with a purse of gold. See Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII. p. 247.

a woman of Godalmin, who pretended to be delivered of rabbits, because her monstrous births were deemed, by him, to be the exact completion of an old prediction in Esdras.*

In almost every case of wrong associations, the understanding either voluntarily suspends its controlling and directing power, or is deluded into a conformity with fancy; and the mind still retains a consciousness of freedom, and of moral agency. But there are certain habits, which usurp, by *force*, the dominion of reason, and compel the will to gratify inordinate desires, by the choice of known evil, in preference to acknowledged good. The lamentation of the poet, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, seems also to have been felt by St. Paul, who says, Rom. vii. 11. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do*

* Gent. Mag. July 1781, p. 321.

not ; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that, which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do, but sin that dwelleth in me. If an enlightened Apostle speaks in such abasing terms of himself, with how much more truth and propriety might the same language have been adopted, by a late advocate for the divine dispensation of the Gospel. For charity inclines me to hope, that the learned author of the *Christian Hero* wrote in consistency with, whilst he *acted* in opposition to, his most serious conviction. This work, Sir Richard Steele informs us,* was composed by him, principally with a view to contrast impressions of piety and virtue, with the strong propensity, which he experienced, to licentious pleasures. For he says, even when rioting in scenes of debauchery, he was deeply conscious of the impropriety of his conduct, and

* See his *Apology* for himself and his writings.

condemned those unlawful gratifications, which he had not resolution to renounce. His Christian Hero, however, whilst the treatise remained privately in his own hands, afforded but a weak and ineffectual check to his vicious pursuits. He, therefore, determined to publish it; that, by thus placing himself in a new light, before his acquaintance, he might be restrained from guilt, by an explicit and avowed testimony in favour of goodness. But it does not appear that this singular experiment proved successful. Steele forsook not his debaucheries; and by having affected the saint, he aggravated, in the opinion of his friends, his condemnation as a sinner. Yet, Mr. Pope, who knew him well, justified him from the imputation of hypocrisy; and always regarded him as a real lover of virtue, in *theory*, though a slave to vice, in *practice*.*

* Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 493. Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII.

Many other examples might be adduced of the force of evil habits, and the pernicious influence of false associations, whether intellectual or moral: But to dwell long on the shades of the human character, is apt to abate our benevolence to mankind; and to impair the principle of veneration, towards the great Author of our nature. More pleasing would be the task, and I will add, more easy too, to vindicate the wisdom of the Divine laws, by shewing, that the power of habit, and the propensity to combine ideas together, are essential to the just constitution of the mind: And that, without their well regulated aid, knowledge would be unattainable, virtue a transient emotion or desultory act, and life itself a scene of indifference and insipidity.

O N

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

I N

LITERARY PURSUITS.

N 4

RETINUIT, QUOD EST DIFFICILLIMUM, EX
SAPIENTIA MODUM.

TACIT. VIT. AGRICOL.

O N

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

I N

LITERARY PURSUITS.

He, who hath treasures of his own,
May leave a cottage, or a throne ;
May quit the world to dwell alone,
Within his spacious mind.

WHERE, amongst the men of
Science, is the Archetype to be
found, of a picture so flattering to hu-
man pride ? The original, from which
it appears to have been drawn, was, in-
deed, an exalted character ; but at the
same time, alas ! a feeble valetudinarian,
who must have experienced those mortify-
ing

ing impediments to mental exertion, which arise from a constitution naturally delicate, and broken by laborious researches into truth. Under such circumstances, could it be affirmed, that

Locke had a soul,
Wide as the sea,
Calm as the night,
Bright as the day ;
There might his vast ideas play,
Nor feel a thought confin'd.

The amiable Poet,* who has thus portrayed, with the glowing colours of admiration and respect, one of the most distinguished ornaments of the human species, passed himself a life of lingering sickness: And, though his genius was fertile, and his industry wonderfully and variously productive, yet, such was his sensibility of the obstructions he had to surmount, that he made a painful and

* Dr. Watts.

humiliating

humiliating calculation of the days, months, and years, which he had lost, even by his slightest malady, the tooth-ach. The celebrated M. Pascal languished, four years, under a distemper, which, without manifesting itself by many outward signs, or occasioning confinement, debarred him of the pleasures and improvements of study. And it was the anxious office of his friends, to guard him from writing, or speaking on any topics, which might exercise much thought or attention.* Mr. Pope's vital functions were so disordered, that his life is emphatically said to have been a *long disease*. The head-ach was his most frequent assailant; and he used to relieve it, by inhaling the steams of coffee, which he often required during those hours, that should have afforded the refreshment of sleep: Such was his earnestness and sollicitude in the profes-

* Preface to Pascal's Thoughts.

tion of his literary undertakings, that Swift complains, he was never at leisure for conversation. And one of lord Oxford's domestics related, that in the severe winter of 1740, she was called from her bed four times, in one night, to supply him with paper, that he might not lose a thought.* The learned biographer, who, with all the severity of sarcasm, records this fact, acknowledges, in the preface to the most laborious of his works, that he himself *triumphed* in the acquisitions, which he should display to mankind: and indulged all the dreams of a Poet doomed, at last, to wake a Lexicographer. For he found that “one enquiry only gave occasion
 “to another, that book referred to
 “book; that to search was not always
 “to find; and to find was not always
 “to be informed; and that thus to pursue
 “perfection, was, like the first inhabitants
 “of Arcadia, to chace the

* Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

“ fun, which, when they had reached
“ the hill where he seemed to rest, was
“ still beheld at the same distance from
“ them.” There is a passage in Thom-
son’s *Castle of Indolence*, so applicable to
this kind of folly, that I am tempted to
transcribe it.

This globe pourtray’d the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o’er the page,
Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the pen,
As if inspir’d, and in a Thespian rage,
Then write and blot, as would your ruth engage.
Why, authors! all this scrawl and scribbling fore?
To lose the present, gain the future age,
Praised to be, when you can hear no more;
And much enrich’d with fame, when uselefs
worldly store?*

The examples, which I have recited,
are of men occupied chiefly, if not solely,
in the walks of literature. But the taste
for knowledge may be cultivated, suc-
cessfully, in the busy scenes of active

* Thomson’s *Castle of Indolence*, Canto I.

life. And under these circumstances, astonishing proficiency has been made, by the combined powers of genius and industry. The works of Tully, Pliny the elder, Bacon, Temple, and Bolingbroke, not to mention various other names of ancient and modern times, are sufficient evidences of this fact. But neither the efforts of genius nor of industry can ward off sickness, obviate solicitude, or stop those unaccountable ebblings of the mind, which even a lowering sky will sometimes produce. Cicero, notwithstanding all his exultation, on the soothing influence of philosophy, found himself under the necessity of retiring, at certain seasons, to one of his country villas, situated near Astura. And in this solitary residence, which was covered with a thick wood, cut into shady walks, he used to pass his hours of spleen and melancholy.*

* Middleton's Life of Cicero, Vol. III. p. 296.

But could we suppose health to be enjoyed without interruption, the spirits to be always lively and active, and all the intellectual faculties in a state of uniform composure and energy, yet still the progress in knowledge would be retarded by error, and obstructed by the want of those materials, for which we must depend on the accuracy, industry, and attainments of others. The temple of science requires, for its elevation, the united labours of myriads of different artists; and the construction of it will be perpetually incident to delays, by the indolence, unskilfulness, and mistakes of those, who are employed in the undertaking. In such circumstances, to unite ardour with serenity, an enthusiasm for science with patience under all the obstructions of pursuit, from outward accident or inward infirmity, is a happiness, of which few can boast.* And the page

* Sir Isaac Newton affords a singular example of temperate ardour, unremitting energy, and almost invariable equanimity.

of biography is filled with narratives of the queruloufnefs, impaired health, and mental imbecility of thofe, who, by their writings, have informed, enlightened, and charmed mankind. Juft views of the defigns of Providence, in the government of the world, and particularly in the ftructure of the human mind with refpect to the progreffive evolution of its faculties, would tend to obviate thefe evils, by reftraining the inordinate aspirations of literary ambition, and by correcting the inconfiftency of expectation, from which they proceed.

Man is evidently conftituted for two great ends; the attainment of virtue, and of knowledge. All his mental endowments have a reference to one or other of thefe final caufes: On them, therefore, muft depend the *perfection*, and *felicity* of his nature. But his moral powers feem more circumfcribed in their operation, and confequently to admit of lefs exten-

sive culture, than those of his understanding. For they are confined within the limits of rational, or at most of sensitive being, and with such they can hold only a partial, and contracted correspondence: whilst the intellectual faculties have, for their object, the whole system of nature, the infinitude of which is, perhaps, not less apparent in its minuteness, than immensity. From these considerations, I am inclined to believe, that our station, in the present world, is intended for near approaches towards the *maturity* of *virtue*; but for the *infancy* only of *knowledge*. And the wisdom of this ordinance, of the Deity, is sufficiently discernible. For as *knowledge* is *power*, the antecedent possession of goodness, to direct it, must be essentially necessary to beatitude. The passions and affections are of speedy growth, and often manifest great vigour in that season of life, which is marked by the feebleness of reason. Increasing years modify, direct, and me-

liorate them; but the discipline of experience serves rather to balance and restrain, than to augment their native strength and energy. On the contrary, the mind proceeds by slow and regular gradations, in the attainment of science. And our acquisitions consist not, solely, in the discovery of new objects or phænomena; but in the comparison of these with what we already know,* and in ascertaining their reciprocal dependencies, relations, or contrarieties. Thus knowledge is multiplied beyond the sum of its separate and component parts: And every accession to it increases the stock in a ratio, that, we may devoutly trust, will become greater and greater through all eternity.

But the bulk of mankind, in this stage of existence, are in circumstances, which preclude any considerable advancement

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy.

in learning. And we may observe, that the dispensation of the Gospel gives no *direct* encouragement to it,* but applies all its precepts and exhortations to the cultivation of the heart. For the principles and practice of virtue are accommodated to every period and condition of life; and are exercised, refined, and exalted even by poverty, infirmity, sickness, and old age; all which check the exertions, and depress the vigour of human genius. Rectitude of disposition and of conduct bears a precise and permanent relation to all times, persons, and occurrences. And if we ascend from particular to general excellence, by contemplating the duty of man in the aggregate, we may form a distinct and

* Many passages, in the New Testament, according to a literal interpretation, seem *directly levelled against* human learning; which is described as vain, deceitful, traditionary, consisting of endless genealogies, idle babblings, and profane fables. But the best commentators are of opinion, that these censures have a reference only to the absurd philosophy of the Gnostics or Sophists, which was derived from the Egyptians.

adequate idea of *moral perfection*. But what mind can expand itself to the conception of *complete intelligence*!—Every step of our ascent, on the hill of science, presents to the view a widening horizon; and the boundary of darkness increases, in proportion to the amplitude of those enlightened regions, which it incircles.

It is this endless progression of knowledge, which is apt to give the *love* of it an inordinate ascendancy over every other principle, so as to render it the *ruling passion* of the mind. And, as this passion does not, like the love of virtue, temper its particular exertions, by preserving a due subordination in the powers which it calls forth into action, the wildest extravagances, of emotion and of conduct, have been displayed by those, who submit to its uncontrouled dominion. A great philosopher has rushed naked, from the bath,
into

into the streets of a populous city, frantic with joy, on the solution of an interesting problem. Tacitus informs us, that his excellent father-in-law Agricola
 “ was inclined to have engaged more
 “ deeply, in the studies of philosophy
 “ and law, than was suitable to a Roman
 “ and a senator, if the discretion of his
 “ mother had not restrained the warmth
 “ and vehemence of his disposition:
 “ For his high spirit, inflamed by the
 “ charms of glory and exalted reputa-
 “ tion, led him to the pursuit, with
 “ more eagerness than judgment. Rea-
 “ son, and riper years, mitigated his
 “ ardour; and, what is a *most difficult task*,
 “ *he preserved moderation in science itself.*”*

The emperor Marcus Antoninus, in one of his meditations, expresses fervent gratitude to the gods, that, by their favour, he had made no further advances in

* Tacitus in Vit. Agric. See, also, Mr. Aikin's elegant translation of this admirable piece of Biography, p. 65.

rhetoric, poetry, and other amusing studies; that he had not bestowed too much time on voluminous reading, logical disputations, or researches into physics; because these might have engrossed his mind, or diverted his attention from the peculiar duties of his elevated station.*

Just and weighty, therefore, is the maxim of another ancient moralist, with which I shall conclude these reflections, that *we should not rest satisfied with the WORDS of wisdom, without the WORKS; nor turn philosophy into an idle pleasure, which was given us for a salutary remedy.* †

* Marc. Antonin. Lib. I.

† Seneca.

O N T H E

ADVANTAGES OF A TASTE

FOR THE GENERAL

BEAUTIES OF NATURE,

AND OF ART.

ME VERO PRIMUM DULCES ANTE OMNIA MUSÆ
ACCIPIANT! -----

VIRG.

QUID MINUAT CURAS, QUID TE TIBI REDDAT
AMICUM.

HOR.

S E C T I O N I.

O N T H E

B E A U T I E S O F N A T U R E.

THAT sensibility to beauty, which, when cultivated and improved, we term Taste, is universally diffused through the human species: And it is most uniform with respect to those objects, which, being out of our power, are not liable to variation, from accident, caprice, or fashion. The verdant lawn, the shady grove, the variegated landscape, the boundless ocean, and the starry firmament, are contemplated with pleasure by every attentive beholder.

But

But the emotions of different spectators, though similar in kind, differ widely in degree: And to relish, with full delight, the enchanting scenes of nature, the mind must be uncorrupted by avarice, sensuality, or ambition; quick in her sensibilities; elevated in her sentiments; and devout in her affections. He, who possesses such exalted powers of perception and enjoyment, may almost say, with the Poet,

“ I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
 “ You cannot rob me of free Nature’s grace;
 “ You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
 “ Thro’ which Aurora shews her brightening face;
 “ You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
 “ The woods and lawns, by living stream, at eve:
 “ Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
 “ And I their toys to the great children leave:
 “ Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.”*

Perhaps such ardent enthusiasm may not be compatible with the necessary

* Thomson’s Castle of Indolence.

toils, and active offices, which Providence has assigned to the generality of men. But there are none, to whom some portion of it may not prove advantageous; and if it were cherished, by each individual, in that degree which is consistent with the indispensable duties of his station, the felicity of human life would be considerably augmented. From this source, the refined and vivid pleasures of the imagination are almost entirely derived: And the elegant arts owe their choicest beauties to a taste for the contemplation of nature. Painting and sculpture are express imitations of visible objects: And where would be the charms of poetry, if divested of the imagery and embellishments, which she borrows from rural scenes? Painters, statuaries, and poets, therefore, are always ambitious to acknowledge themselves the pupils of nature; and as their skill increases, they grow more and more delighted with every view of the animal
and

and vegetable world. But the pleasure resulting from admiration is transient; and to cultivate taste, without regard to its influence on the passions and affections, “is to rear a tree for its blossoms, “ which is capable of yielding the richest, “ and most valuable fruit.”* Physical and moral beauty bear so intimate a relation to each other, that they may be considered as different gradations in the scale of excellence; and the knowledge and relish of the former, should be deemed only a step to the nobler and more permanent enjoyments of the latter.

Whoever has visited the Leasowes, in Warwickshire, must have felt the force and propriety of an inscription, which meets the eye, at the entrance into those delightful grounds.

“ Would you then taste the tranquil scene ?

“ Be sure your bosoms be serene ;

* Shenstone.

“ Devoid of hate, devoid of strife,
 “ Devoid of all that poisons life :
 “ And much it ’vails you, in their place
 “ To graft the love of human race.”*

Now such scenes contribute power-
 fully to inspire that serenity, which is
 necessary to enjoy, and to heighten their
 beauties. By a secret contagion, the
 soul catches the harmony, which she
 contemplates ; and the frame within, as-
 similates itself to that which is without.
 For,

“ Who can forbear to smile with Nature ? Can
 “ The stormy passions in the bosom roll,
 “ While every gale is peace, and every grove
 “ Is melody ?” †

* Shenstone.

† Thomson’s Seasons, first Edit.

Horace, when he breaks forth into the animated exclamation,

“ *O, rus ! quando ego te aspiciam, quandoque licebit*

“ *Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis*

“ *Ducere sollicitæ jucunda obliviam vitæ ;*”

seems to regret the want of that heartfelt complacency, which
 the bustle, pomp, and pleasures of imperial Rome could not
 afford,

In

In this state of sweet compofure, we become fufceptible of virtuous impreffions, from almoft every furrounding object. The patient ox is viewed with generous complacency; the guilelefs fheep, with pity; and the playful lamb raifes emotions of tendernefs and love. We rejoice with the horfe, in his liberty and exemption from toil, whilft he ranges at large through enamelled pastures; and the frolics of the colt would afford unmixed delight, did we not recollect the bondage, which he is foon to undergo. We are charmed with the fongs of birds, foothed with the buzz of infects, and pleafed with the fportive motions of fifhes, becaufe thefe are expreffions of enjoyment; and we exult in the felicity of the whole animated creation. Thus an equal and extenfive benevolence is called forth into exertion; and having *felt* a common intereft in the gratifications of inferior beings, we fhall be no longer indifferent

indifferent to their sufferings, or become wantonly instrumental in producing them.

It seems to be the intention of Providence, that the lower orders of animals should be subservient to the comfort, convenience, and sustenance of man. But his right of dominion extends no farther; and if this right be exercised with mildness, humanity, and justice, the subjects of his power will be no less benefitted than himself. For various species of living creatures are annually multiplied by human art, improved in their perceptive powers by human culture, and plentifully fed by human industry. The relation, therefore, is reciprocal, between such animals and man; and he may supply his own wants by the use of their labour, the produce of their bodies, and even the sacrifice of their lives; whilst he co-operates with all-gracious Heaven, in promoting HAPPINESS, the great end of existence.

But

But though it be true, that *partial evil*, with respect to different orders of sensitive beings, may be *universal good*; and that it is a wise and benevolent institution of nature, to make destruction itself, within certain limitations, the cause of an increase of life and enjoyment; yet a generous person will extend his compassionate regards to every individual, that suffers for his sake: And, whilst he sighs

“ Ev’n for the kid, or lamb, that pours its life
 “ Beneath the bloody knife;”*

he will naturally be solicitous to mitigate pain, both in duration and degree, by the gentlest modes of inflicting it.

I am inclined to believe, however, that this sense of humanity would soon be obliterated, and that the heart would grow callous to every soft impression, were it not for the benignant influence

* Lord Lyttelton.

of the smiling face of nature. The Count de Lauzun, when imprisoned by Louis XIV. in the castle of Pignerol, amused himself, during a long period of time, with catching flies, and delivering them to be devoured by a rapacious spider. Such an entertainment was equally singular and cruel; and inconsistent, I believe, with his former character, and subsequent turn of mind. But his cell had no window; and received only a glimmering light, from an aperture in the roof. In less unfavourable circumstances, may we not presume, that instead of sporting with misery, he would have released the agonising flies; and bid them enjoy that freedom, of which he himself was bereaved?

But the taste for natural beauty is subservient to higher purposes, than those which have been enumerated: And the cultivation of it not only refines and humanises, but dignifies and exalts the

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affections.

affections. It elevates them to the admiration and love of that Being, who is the Author of all that is fair, sublime, and good in the creation. Scepticism and irreligion are hardly compatible with the sensibility of heart,* which arises from a just and lively relish of the wisdom, harmony, and order subsisting in the world around us: And emotions of piety must spring up spontaneously in the bosom, that is in unison with all animated nature. Actuated by this divine inspiration, man finds a fane in every grove: And glowing with devout fervour, he joins his song to the universal chorus; or mutes the praise of the Almighty, in more expressive silence. Thus they

“ Whom Nature’s works can charm, with GOD
himself

“ Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day,

“ With his conceptions; act upon his plan;

“ And form to his, the relish of their souls.” †

* See Gregory’s Comparative View.

† Akenfide.

S E C T I O N II.

O N

A GENERAL TASTE FOR THE

F I N E A R T S.

THE analogy of physical to moral beauty, and the connection subsisting between a good heart, and a just relish for the general works of nature, have, I trust, been fully established. But, though all mankind are endued with the principle or faculty of taste, it often lies almost entirely dormant, for want of cultivation. The savage Indian, wholly

occupied in providing for the necessities of life, traverses the desert, and the flowery lawn, with equal indifference. Eager in the chase, he scarcely turns his eye, as he passes along, to contemplate the golden beams of the setting sun, reflected from the lake of Erie. Or if he quit his native wilds, in the summer season, to fish in the river Ohio, he sits in his canoe, inattentive to the awful cataract, and views the most splendid scene in the creation, with slight and transient emotions. Nor are the generality of men, even in civilised society, or in the higher walks of life, fully qualified to comprehend or to admire the *assemblage* of beauties, which the visible creation presents to the view of an enlightened imagination. Single objects, or detached parts, attract the notice and engross the attention: And the mind, by an easy transition, passes to the recognition and relish of those operations
of

of human skill, which are their symbols, or representations. For the elegant arts are all imitative in their essence and origin. Thus music, by the variation of its movements and tones, calls up, into the mind, ideas both of the natural, animal, and rational world. The murmuring brook, and boisterous ocean; the stormy wind, and gentle zephyr; the wild roar of the lion, the bleating of the lamb, and the plaintive melody of the nightingale, are all within the compass of its mimetic enchantments. These are extended even to the passions and emotions of the human heart; so as to typify anger, pity, remorse, delight, and sorrow. Painting occupies a still wider field of similitude and association; displaying all those objects, which are known to us, in nature, by diversity of figure, or the various shades of colour. Even motions and sounds may be expressed by this wonderful art. For, as

they are accompanied, in many instances, with a certain configuration, or position of parts, the sign is readily adopted for the thing signified. And we see or hear upon the canvas, the horse *starting* aghast at the sudden view of the lion; the soldier *running* towards his dying general with the news of victory; the cock *crowing* at the denial of Peter; and the waterfall *dashing* against the rocks below.*

Poetry, under which term I mean to comprehend all numerous and rhetorical composition, derives most of its charms from allusions, similes, metaphors, or descriptions; and these are obviously imitative. In this way, its powers are so transcendent, that even a single epithet will sometimes produce a representation more picturesque, than the pencil of Poussin, or Salvator Rosa, ever ex-

* Mr. Stubbs's Picture, The death of General Wolfe, &c.

hibited. The first line, in the following stanza of Gray's elegy, will afford an example, and a proof, of what is here advanced.

Now fades the *glimmering* landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.*

The accuracy and force of the word *glimmering* must be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extensive prospect, about an hour after sun-set.

The mimetic arts have some advantages over nature herself; for the imitations, with which they present us, are generally agreeable, even though their archetypes be, in themselves, indifferent or disgusting. The mind delights in comparison; and this pleasure is heightened

* Gray's Elegy.

by the recognition of resemblance, and by the contemplation of ingenious design, or masterly execution. Who can read Mr. Gay's description of a poor, benighted traveller, without being charmed at the verisimilitude of the narration; which is, at once, so clear, so discriminative, and circumstantial, that we become, as it were, spectators of a scene, which either in its parts, or in the whole, is exactly correspondent to our recollection and experience.

It is evident, therefore, that the fine arts have, for their object, the gratification of the same faculty, which perceives and relishes the charms of nature. And by analogy we may infer, that the exercise, which they give to the taste, is favourable to the virtuous affections of the heart. This truth has been so long acknowledged, that the observation of

the Poet is now received, as an established maxim in ethics ;

*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.***

But the validity of this canon is not to be admitted, without some restriction. The energies of music, painting, and poetry, are so powerful and multifarious, that they have, at command, all the emotions and passions of the soul,

----- *pectus inaniter angunt,
Irritant, mulcent, falsis terroribus implent.**

They may excite or restrain, kindle or extinguish passion, and thus, according to their application, become the instruments either of vice, or of virtue. They are incident, likewise, to numberless adventitious associations, which, counter-acting or diversifying their natural and original tendency, may make them administer to vanity, ostentation, pride,

* Hor. Epist. I. Lib. 2.

envy, and jealousy. Such dispositions are sometimes found in the professors of these arts; and the display of them, in men of distinguished genius and merit; raises in our minds a painful struggle of discordant emotions.*

Whoever, therefore, yields himself, implicitly, to the magic delusions of the fine arts, is in danger of having his judgment impaired, his heart corrupted, and his capacity destroyed for the ordinary duties and enjoyments of life. To this source may be traced all the follies and extravagance of what is termed VERTU. Admiration stimulates the desire of possession, however immoderate the price; possession turns the admiration of the object to ourselves; and this is suc-

* Who would not laugh, if such a one there be?

Who would not weep, if Atticus were he? POPE.

No reflection is meant, by the quotation of these lines, on the very respectable character to whom they allude. They were dictated by resentment, and reprobated by some of the Poet's best friends.

ceeded by a fond and absurd impatience to display a superiority over others, both in taste and property.

What brought Sir Visto's ill got wealth to waste?
 Some dæmon whisper'd, "Visto, have a taste."
 Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool;
 And needs no rod, but Ripley with a rule.*

But it is further to be observed, that, as an acute relish for beauty, and a quick discernment of deformity are, in a certain proportion, necessarily connected together; the latter may become predominant, through pride, affectation, or too frequent indulgence. Whenever this happens, taste will prove the instrument of pain, and not of pleasure: And the fastidious feelings of disgust, so often excited, will be transferred, from the works of human skill, to human life; rendering the temper petulant, morose, and selfish. But a perversion of the

* Pope's Moral Essays.

powers of the imagination is no argument against their proper culture, and well regulated application. For reason itself is liable to abuse; and philosophy and religion have been rendered subservient to scepticism and superstition.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ALLIANCE OF

NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY,

WITH POETRY.

----- NIL SCRIBENS IPSE DOCEBO
UNDE PARENTUR OPES; QUID ALAT FORMETQUE
POETAM.

----- VATIBUS ADDERE CALCAR.

HOR.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ALLIANCE OF

NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY,

WITH POETRY.*

THE maxim of lord Verulam, that
“knowledge is power,” is no less
applicable to poesy, than to philosophy.
For whether we engage in this delightful
pursuit as an art, or as a science, it is
evident that the ability to convey, and
the capacity to relish its peculiar plea-

* In this Essay, the author has confined his views, chiefly,
to the application of natural knowledge, to that branch of the
poetic art, which relates to DESCRIPTION; reserving, for
some future occasion, the alliance of physics, with poetical
IMAGERY and MORAL ANALOGY.

fures,

fures, must be exactly proportioned to our acquaintance with the means either of communicating or enjoying them. The works of creation are the great storehouse, where these means are to be sought. And an inquisitive attention to every surrounding object is essential to the poet, and highly useful to the lover of poetry. He, who extends his researches beyond the surface of things, will find that the treasures of nature are inexhaustible. For it is literally, no less than metaphorically true, that

- - - Many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Yet few have been the labourers in this rich harvest of science, since the days of Theocritus; and the pastoral descriptions and images of that ancient Sicilian bard, have been used like hereditary

* Gray's Elegy.

property, by all succeeding poets. In the ruder ages of the world, the modes of life were peculiarly favourable to the observation of nature. Rural scenery was continually before the eyes; and the culture of land, or the care of sheep and cattle, constituted the occupation of the greatest personages. This furnished a rich supply of original materials, which must for ever be withheld from those, who immure themselves in cities, and contemplate only the operations of art. Writers, therefore, of this class, are humbly satisfied to be mere copyists of others; and adopt, without reserve, the figures, allusions, and representations of their poetical predecessors. But science, which is borrowed, is often misunderstood: And it is not in the power, even of genius itself, to obviate the mistakes which are committed through ignorance. Who, for instance, can notice the countenance of the Ox, without perceiving, that it displays meekness, patience, and the

most inoffensive disposition;* and that the eyes of this animal are of no unusual dimension? Yet, in many versions of Homer, that divine poet, so conversant with zoology, is made to stile the artful, proud, and passionate queen of the gods “Ox-eyed Juno.” This mistake of the translators has evidently arisen, from the want of attention to nature. And M. Dacier has shewn, that the particle $\epsilon\varsigma$ is only an augmentative, signifying (*valde*) large-eyed; and that it has no direct relation to the ox. The error, which Dr. Young has fallen into, in his paraphrase on Job, is more pardonable; because an English poet, who has never seen the CROCODILE, might be ignorant that his eyes are remarkably small. This animal is supposed to be the Leviathan, described in the 41st chapter of that book. And, if the explanation be true,

* Thomson thus describes the ox :

----- And the plain ox,
That honest, harmless, guileless animal,

the

the following passage must have a reference to the brightness, and not to the magnitude, of his organs of sight, as my friend Mr. Aikin has judiciously remarked.* *By his neezings a light doth shine; and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.* Dr. Young, by a misconception of the original, has rendered this strong figure still more hyperbolic.

“ Large is his front; and when his burnish’d eyes
 “ Lift their *broad* lids, the morning seems to rise.”

In a former essay I have remarked, concerning the mimetic powers of poetry, that a single word will sometimes produce a representation more picturesque, than the pencil of Poussin, or of Salvator Rosa, ever exhibited. And the observation was exemplified by this line of Mr. Gray;

“ Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
 sight,”

* See his elegant and ingenious Essay, on the Application of Natural History to Poetry.

in which the accuracy and force of the epithet *glimmering* will be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extensive prospect, about an hour after sun-set.* But a gentleman of this county, who has inserted the foregoing line in a very elegant little poem, by an unfortunate transposition, has entirely destroyed its beauty, truth, and energy.

“Now fades the landscape on the *glimmering* sight.”

Many original writers, of the most distinguished reputation, have deviated widely from nature, by adopting facts and opinions without examination, or on insufficient authority. Thus the poet Lucretius, who flourished about fifty years before the Christian æra, has sanctioned the vulgar error, that, in the JAUNDICE, objects are painted on the retina, of the same colour with that, which tinges the external coat of the

* Essay on the Advantages of a Taste for Nature and the Fine Arts.

eye; and has given a theory of it in conformity to the philosophy of the Epicurean school.

*Lurida præterea fiunt quæcunque tuentur
Arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
Semina multa fluunt, simulacris obvia rerum;
Multaque sunt oculis in eorum denique mista,
Quæ contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt.**

Besides, whatever jaundic'd eyes do view,
Look pale, as well as those, and yellow too,
For lurid parts fly off, with nimble wings,
And meet the distant coming forms of things:
And others lurk within the eyes, and seize,
And stain, with pale, the entering images. †

Mr. Pope has authoris'd the same observation, in his Essay on Criticism.

“ All seems infected, that th' infected spy,
“ As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.”

And the like mistaken allusion is more than once repeated in an admirable poem, lately published by Mr. Hayley.

* Lucretius, Lib. IV. line 333.

† Creech's Transf. of Lucret. Book IV. line 344.

“ The bards of Britain, with unjaundic’d eyes,
 “ Will glory to behold such rivals rise.*

“ On fairest names, from every blemish free ;
 “ Save what the jaundic’d eyes of party see.”

I am inclined to believe there is no sufficient foundation for this opinion. Galen indeed speaks of yellow vision, as common to icteric patients ; and Sextus Empyricus has delivered the same account : But their relation is neither confirmed by experience, nor consonant to reason. In the worst cases of the jaundice, now known, this symptom has no existence ; and I do not find it noticed in the records of Aretæus, Celsus, or Hippocrates.

The supposition, that the fertilising quality of snow arises from nitrous salts, which it is supposed to acquire in the act of freezing, is void of foundation ;

* On Epic Poetry, Epist. IV.

because the most accurate experiments have demonstrated, that it contains no nitre, and only a small portion of calcareous earth. False philosophy, says an eminent chemist,* first gave rise to this idea, and poetry has contributed to diffuse the error. Thus Mr. Philips;

----- O may'st thou often see
 Thy furrows whiten'd by the woolly rain,
 Nutritious; secret nitre lurks within
 The porous wet; quickening the languid glebe.

But the following lines, of Mr. Thomson, do not appear to me to be liable to the same objection. For the term *salts*, with the annexed epithet *little*, may be applied, without much poetical licence, to the crystals of water, formed by freezing.

What art thou, frost?
 Is not thy potent energy unseen,
 Myriads of *little salts*, or hook'd, or shap'd
 Like double wedges, and diffus'd immense
 Thro' water, earth and ether?

* Dr. Watson, now Bishop of Landaff, in his *Chemical Essays*.

The operation of frost is here ascribed to its mechanical powers. For, by binding the surface of the earth, it arrests the exhalations, as they ascend from the parts below; and thus retains a nutritious *pabulum*, to be applied, at the proper season, to the roots of plants. But it chiefly meliorates the soil, by pulverising the particles which compose it, and fitting them for the absorption of the vernal dews and rains.

Whenever PHILOSOPHY is introduced into poetry, truth, for the most part, is essential to its power of giving pleasure. And our great epic writer seems to descend, sometimes, from the majesty of his work, by mixing, with modern discoveries, the groundless opinions of the ancients. Thus, when Raphael addresses Adam, concerning the great system of nature, he says,

----- Other suns, perhaps,
 With their attendant moons, thou wilt descry,
 Communicating *male* and *female* light.*

* Milton's Paradise Lost, Book VIII. line 148.

The idea of *male* light being communicated by the *sun*, and *female* light by the *moon*, probably originated, in the mind of Milton, from his intimate acquaintance with the writings of Pliny; who mentions, as a tradition, “ that
 “ the sun is a masculine star, drying all
 “ things, but that the moon is a soft and
 “ feminine star, of dissolving power:
 “ And that thus the balance of nature
 “ is preserved; some of the stars binding
 “ the elements; and others loosening
 “ them.” *

The HARMONY of the SPHERES, or musical revolution of the heavenly bodies in their several orbits, was first taught by the Pythagoreans; who seem to have

* *Solis ardore ficitur liquor; et hoc esse masculinum sidus accipimus, torrens cuncta sorbensque.---E contrario ferunt lunam femininum ac molle sidus, atque nocturnum solvere humorem.---Ita persari naturæ vices, semperque sufficere, aliis siderum elementa cogentibus, aliis vero fudentibus. Hist. Nat. Lib. II. Cap. 100. See also the notes to Newton's Edit. of Par. Lost.*

derived this fanciful doctrine from analogy. For it was observed, by these philosophers, that a musical chord produces the same note, as one double in length, when the force is quadruple with which the latter is stretched: Hence they supposed that the gravity of a planet is quadruple the gravity of a planet, at a double distance. And as any musical chord may become unison to a lesser chord, of the same kind, if its tension be increased in the same proportion as the square of its length is greater; so the gravity of a planet may become equal to the gravity of another planet, nearer to the sun, provided it be increased in proportion as the square of its distance from the sun is greater. If, therefore, musical chords be extended from the sun to each planet, to bring them into unison, it would be requisite, to increase or diminish their tensions, in the same proportions, as would be sufficient to render
the

the gravity of the planets equal.* This notion of the Pythagoreans is so pleasing to the imagination, that it is not surprising the poets have adopted it. And Milton has given such a view of it, as wants nothing but philosophical truth to render it delightful.

Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
Resembles nearest; mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular,
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones, that God's
 own ear
Listens delighted. †

Mr. Pope has not only supposed the actual existence of this heavenly harmony, but that it is possible the human ear might have been so constituted, as to have been sensible of it.

* Vid. Plin. Lib. II. Cap. 22. Macrob. Lib. II. Cap. 1.
See also, Maclaurin's account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, page 34.

† Paradise Lost, Book V. line 620.

If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres;
 How would he wish that heav'n had left him still,
 The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill? *

Those, who are in possession of the first or second edition of Thomson's Seasons, will find a gross geographical mistake, in the hymn which is annexed to them. Towards the close of this beautiful poem, the author expresses his pious confidence in the universal wisdom, and impartial benevolence of the Deity; and asserts, that the same regular seasons, which he had described with such fervour of delight in the preceding work, are equally experienced in every part of the globe.

- - - - - God is ever present, ever felt,
 In the void waste, as in the city full;
 Roll the *same kindred seasons* round the world,
 In all *apparent*, wise and good in all.

* Essay on Man, Ep. I. ver. 201.

The two last lines are omitted, in the subsequent editions of this poem.

The SYSTEM of PHILOSOPHY, which is now received, independent of its superiority in point of truth, infinitely exceeds in extent, elevation, and grandeur, that of the ancients. The poet, therefore, should be well versed in the science of physics, not only because he can seldom deviate from it,* without injury to his

* In the following lines, the thought becomes low, by being unphilosophical.

----- O thievish night,
 Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
 In thy *dark lantborn* thus close up the stars
 That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their *lamps*
 With everlasting *oil*.

Milton's *Comus*.

The sentiment is more brilliant, in a subsequent passage of this poem, but not more solid. And it is rendered absurd by the least reflection, on the impossibility of sinking the vast orbs of the sun and moon, in the ocean; or, as it is here improperly stiled, the *flat sea*.

Virtue could see to do what virtue would,
 By her own radiant light; though sun and moon
 Were in the *flat sea* sunk.

Id.

compositions, but because these may derive from it sublimity, embellishment, or grace. Astronomy, in particular, furnishes such magnificent ideas, and boundless views, that imagination can hardly grasp, much less exalt or amplify them. “The objects which we commonly call “great,” says an eminent writer, “vanish, “when we contemplate the vast body of “the earth; the terraqueous globe itself “is soon lost in the solar system. In “some parts it is seen as a distant star; “in others it is unknown; or visible “only at rare times, to vigilant observers. “The sun itself dwindles into a star; “Saturn’s vast orbit, and the orbits of “all the comets, crowd into a point, “when viewed from numberless spaces “between the earth and the nearest of “the fixed stars. Other suns kindle light “to illuminate other systems, where our “sun’s rays are unperceived; but they “also are swallowed up in the vast expanse. Even all the systems of the “stars,

“ stars, that sparkle in the clearest sky,
 “ must possess a corner only of that space,
 “ through which such systems are dis-
 “ persed: Since more stars are discovered
 “ in one constellation, by the telescope,
 “ than the naked eye perceives in the
 “ whole heavens. After we have risen
 “ so high, and left all definite measures
 “ far behind us, we find ourselves no
 “ nearer to a term or limit; for all this
 “ is nothing to what may be displayed
 “ in the infinite expanse, beyond the re-
 “ moteft stars that have hitherto been dis-
 “ covered.”* This description, though
 delivered in the chaste language of a
 mathematician; is, in sentiment, so truly
 sublime, that it wants nothing but num-
 bers to constitute it poetry. And, in the
 following lines, it appears with all the
 charms of grace and harmony.

- - - - - Seiz'd in thought,
 On Fancy's wild and roving wing I sail
 From the green borders of the peopled earth,

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Isaac Newton's Discoveries, p. 164

And the pale moon, her duteous, fair attendant;
From solitary Mars; from the vast orb
Of Jupiter, whose huge gigantic bulk
Dances in ether, like the lightest leaf;
To the dim verge, the suburbs of the system,
Where cheerless Saturn 'midst his wat'ry moons
Girt with a lucid zone, majestic sits
In gloomy grandeur, like an exil'd queen
Amongst her weeping handmaids: fearless thence
I launch into the trackless deeps of space,
Where burning round ten thousand suns appear,
Of elder beam; which ask no leave to shine
Of our terrestrial star, nor borrow light
From the proud regent of our scanty day;
Sons of the morning, first-born of creation,
And only less than Him who marks their track,
And guides their fiery wheels. Here must I stop?
Or is there aught beyond? What hand, unseen,
Impels me onward, through the glowing orbs
Of habitable nature; far remote,
To the dread confines of eternal night,
To solitudes of vast unpeopled space,
The desarts of creation, wide and wild;
Where embryo systems, and unkindled suns
Sleep in the womb of chaos! Fancy droops,
And thought, astonish'd, stops her bold career!*

* Mrs. Barbauld's Evening Meditation.

Homer, whose knowledge of the magnitude and distances of the heavenly bodies, must have been very confined, never displays a more glowing imagination, than when he introduces them to our notice. And no one can view his animated picture of a moonlight and starry night, without feeling himself transported to the scene, which it exhibits.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred
light;

When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.*

* Pope's Homer's Iliad, Book VIII, line 687.

Mr. Pope has translated this passage with singular felicity; and perhaps it may be the fastidiousness of criticism to remark, that a *refulgent moon* is not compatible with *vivid planets*, and *glowing stars*; because these fainter lights are eclipsed by the splendour of that luminary. But, though Homer, probably, did not mean to introduce a full moon, as his commentator Eustathius has observed, yet a judicious Poet has chosen to leave this bright orb out of the evening scenery, which she has so admirably pourtrayed.

----- Nature's self is hush'd ;
 And but a scattered leaf, which rustles thro'
 The thick-wove foliage ; not a sound is heard
 To break the midnight air.

----- 'Tis now the hour
 When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,
 Moves forward ; and with radiant finger points
 Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
 Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether
 One boundless blaze ; ten thousand trembling
 fires

And dancing lustres, where th' unsteady eye,
 Restless

Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd
O'er all this field of glories.*

It may be amusing to contrast the foregoing descriptions of the night, with those recorded by Mr. Macpherson, in his translation of the poems of Ossian. Five bards, passing the night in the house of a Caledonian chief, went out severally to make their observations; and returned with an extempore description of the night, which, as appears from the poem, was in the month of October. I shall here recite part of the composition of the fourth bard, as it is most analogous to the passages, above quoted.

“ Night is calm and fair; blue, starry,
“ settled is night. The winds, with the
“ clouds, are gone. They sink behind
“ the hill. The moon is upon the moun-
“ tain. Trees glisten; streams shine on
“ the rock. Bright rolls the settled lake;
“ bright the stream of the vale.

* Mrs. Barbauld's Even, Med.

“The breezes drive the blue mist,
 “slowly over the narrow vale. It rises
 “on the hill, and joins its head to hea-
 “ven.—Night is settled, calm, blue,
 “starry, bright with the moon. Re-
 “ceive me not, my friends; for lovely is
 “the night.”*

In southern latitudes the HEAVENLY BODIES are far more resplendent, than when viewed through the thick atmosphere of Britain. It is said, that, in Jamaica, the *milky way* is transcendently bright, and that the planet Venus appears like a little moon, glittering with so vivid a beam, as to render visible the shadows of trees, buildings, and other objects.† The setting sun, in that island, exhibits a spectacle peculiarly august. His circumference being enlarged by the interposing vapours, and the refrac-

* Ossian's Croma, p. 255, 4to Edition.

† Hist. of Jamaica, Book II. p. 371.

tion of the rays of light retaining in view his glorious orb, he seems to rest awhile, from his career, on the summit of the mountains. Then he suddenly vanishes, leaving a train of splendour, which streaks the clouds with the most lively and variegated tints, that the happiest fancy can conceive.* In describing such a spectacle as this, the majesty of the great luminary generally absorbs the whole attention of the poet; and he takes little notice of the effect of the sun's declination, on terrestrial objects. Yet it is certain, that a landscape, of small extent, never appears more beautiful, than at the close of a summer's day. Several causes then conspire to give a richness to the scene, and no one so powerfully, as the heightened verdure of the herbage, arising, probably, from the combination of blue and yellow colours, reflected, at the same time, from the golden clouds, and azure sky. Perhaps

* Hist. of Jamaica, Book II. p. 372.

the increased refraction, and softened lustre of the evening rays of light, may also contribute to this effect. For the herbage at that time appears, not only more green, but more copious too: In-
somuch that a pasture, which looks *bare* at noon, seems to abound in grafs at sun-set. When thick black vapours hover about the western sun, and present only small illumined edges, I have observed a circle of green, surrounding his disc; an appearance, which I know not how to account for, but from the union, above described, of blue and yellow rays. This phenomenon I saw, in great perfection, as I was lately travelling over the mountains, which divide the counties of Lancaster and York. The day was wet and stormy; and the war of elements, which I beheld, gave me some faint idea of what is experienced on the Alps and Andes; where the traveller views clouds at his feet, and coruscations of lightning darting, on all sides, below him.

him. Numberless meteors, which are unknown on the plain, present themselves to his astonished sight; such as circular rainbows, parhelia, the shadow of the mountain projected on the air, and his own image adorned with a kind of glory, round the head.* How tremendous is the account, which Don Ulloa has given, of his station on the top of Cotopaxi, a mountain in Peru, more than three geographical miles above the level of the sea! Here he was stationed, a considerable length of time, for the purpose of measuring a degree of the meridian; and the hardships which he suffered, from the intenseness of the cold, and the storms to which he was exposed, almost exceed belief. “The sky,” says he, “was generally obscured with thick fogs; “but, when these were dispersed, and “the clouds moved, by their gravity, “nearer the surface of the earth, they

* Ulloa, Vol. I. Acad. Par. 1744. Priestley on Light and Colours, page 599, &c.

“ furrounded the mountain to a vast dif-
 “ tance, representing the fea, with our
 “ rock, like an ifland in the center of
 “ it. When this happened, we heard
 “ the horrid noiſes of the tempeſts,
 “ which diſcharged themſelves on Quito,
 “ and the neighbouring countries. We
 “ ſaw the lightenings iſſue from the
 “ clouds, and heard the thunders roll
 “ far beneath us. And, whiſt the lower
 “ regions were involved in tempeſts of
 “ thunder and rain, we enjoyed a de-
 “ lightful ſerenity. The wind was huſh-
 “ ed, the ſky clear, and the enlivening
 “ rays of the ſun moderated the ſeverity
 “ of the cold.”* How would a ſcene,
 like this, have been felt and deſcribed
 by the Poet, of whom it is ſaid,

- - - - - When lightning fires
 The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground ;
 When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
 And ocean, groaning from his loweſt bed,

* Ulloa's Voyage, Vol. I. p. 231.

Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky :
 Amid the mighty uproar, while below
 The nations tremble, Shakespear looks abroad
 From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
 The elemental war.*

The awful and gloomy grandeur of the mountainous scenery of Peru is, perhaps, less favourable to the descriptive powers of the poet, than the prospects which some of the Alpine countries of Europe afford. In the cultivated districts of Switzerland, particularly, the views furnish the happiest combination of the sublime and beautiful. And I shall give a short abstract of the observations made, by a late traveller, on the Mole, a mountain, which rises near five thousand feet above the lake of Geneva, and is situated about eighteen miles eastward of that city. "In my ascent," says Sir George Shuckburgh, "I saw the sun, rising behind one of the neighbouring Alps,

* Akenfide's Pleasures of Imagination, Book III. line 590.

“ with a most beautiful effect; and the
“ shadow of the mountain, we were then
“ upon, extended fifteen or twenty miles
“ west. Before me, at some distance,
“ was spread the plain, in which lay
“ Geneva and the lake; behind me rose
“ the Dole, and the long chain of Mont
“ Jura. A little to the left, and much
“ nearer, lay Mont Saleve, which, from
“ this height, appeared an inconsiderable
“ hill. To the right and left, nothing
“ but immense rocks, and pointed moun-
“ tains, of every possible shape, form-
“ ing tremendous precipices. In the
“ vale beneath, several little hamlets,
“ and the most beautiful pasturages,
“ with the river Arve, winding and
“ softening the scene. From whence
“ arose a thick evaporation, collecting
“ itself into clouds, which, on the lake,
“ that was quite covered with them,
“ had the appearance of a sea of cotton;
“ the sun’s beams playing on the upper
“ surface of them, with those tints, which
“ are

“ are seen in a fine evening. To the
“ south west, appeared the lake of An-
“ necy ; behind us lay the Glacieres,
“ and, amongst them, towering above
“ all the rest, stood Mount Blanc. The
“ circumference of the horizon might
“ be about two hundred English miles ;
“ and though not one of the most exten-
“ sive, yet certainly one of the most
“ varied in the world.”*

It is with a reluctance, similar, perhaps, to what this philosophical traveller experienced, when he descended from the Mole, that I quit the imaginary vision of this enchanting scene. But it is necessary to remark, that, however striking such complex and sublime representations may be, they can only be introduced occasionally by the poet ; whose talents for description should be chiefly exercised in the judicious selection and picturesque

* Philosoph. Transact. 1777, p. 536.

display of small groups, or individual objects. Like the magnet, he must draw forth what is valuable, even from the rudest materials; and nicely discriminate, in every surrounding object, those attributes, which can be rendered subservient to his art. We are informed, that Thomson was wont to wander whole days and nights in the country: And, in such sequestered walks, he acquired, by the most minute attention, a knowledge of all the mysteries of nature. These he has wrought into his Seasons with the colouring of Titian, the wildness of Salvator Rosa, and the energy of Raphael.

Milton appears to have been no less familiar with nature, than Thomson, and equally happy in his portraits of her most pleasing forms. He catches every distinguishing feature; and gives to what he describes, such glowing tints of life and reality, that we have it, as it were,
in

in full view before our eyes. How perfect is the image, in the following lines !

----- The swan, with *arched neck*
 Between her *white wings mantling*, proudly rows
 Her state, with *oary feet*.*

Indeed the whole account of the creation, which the Archangel relates to Adam, is so engaging and picturesque, that it would fully refute the criticism of a learned Italian, if the poem contained no other beauties of a similar kind. "The poets beyond the Alps," says Abbè Winckelmann, "speak *figuratively*, but "without *painting*. The strange and "sometimes terrifying figures, which "constitute almost all the grandeur of "Milton, are by no means the *objects* of "a *pencil*, but rather seem beyond the "reach of *painting*."† Surely the de-

* Paradise Lost, Book VII. line 438.

† Histoire des l'Arts chez les Anciens.

scription of the swan, above recited, might be copied on the canvas, by any artist, of tolerable genius. As Milton derived his knowledge of this beautiful bird from actual observation, he has not fallen into the error of the ancient poets, who have, almost universally, ascribed to it a musical voice. Callimachus terms it “Apollo’s tuneful songster;” and Horace compliments Pindar with the epithet “*Dircean swan.*”^{*} Such improprieties clearly evince the importance of natural knowledge to the poet.

The polity of ROOKS is almost constituted with as much order and wisdom, as that of ants, bees, and beavers; and their attachment to places contiguous

* *Multa Dirceum levat aura Cycnum*

Tendit Antoni, quoties in altos

Nubium tractus. Ode II. Lib. 4.

In the address to Melpomene, he says,

O mutis quoque piscibus

Donatura Cycni, si libeat, sonum. Ode III.

to the dwellings of men, not only affords us frequent opportunities of observing them, but interests us, at the same time, in their well-being and preservation. These birds, therefore, furnish the poet with various topics, for the display of his art; and the following incident, by a little colouring, might be wrought into a pathetic picture. A large colony of rooks had subsisted, many years, in a grove, on the banks of the river Irwell, near Manchester. One serene evening, I placed myself within the view of it, and marked, with attention, the various labours, pastimes, and evolutions of this crowded society. The idle members amused themselves with chacing each other, through endless mazes; and, in their flight, they made the air resound with an infinitude of discordant noises. In the midst of these playful exertions, it unfortunately happened, that one rook, by a sudden turn, struck his beak against the wing of another. The sufferer in-

stantly

stantly fell into the river. A general cry of distress ensued. The birds hovered, with every expression of anxiety, over their distressed companion. Animated by their sympathy, and perhaps by the language of counsel, known to themselves, he sprung into the air, and by one strong effort, reached the point of a rock, which projected into the water. The exultation became loud and universal; but, alas! it was soon changed into notes of lamentation. For the poor wounded bird, in attempting to fly towards his nest, dropt again into the river, and was drowned, amidst the moans of his whole fraternity.

The habitudes of the domestic breed of POULTRY cannot, possibly, escape observation: And every one must have noticed the fierce jealousy of the cock,

Whose breast with ardour flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance.*

* Thomson's Spring, line 772.

It should seem that this jealousy is not confined to his rivals, but may sometimes extend to his beloved female: And that he is capable of being actuated by revenge, founded on some degree of reasoning, concerning her conjugal infidelity. An incident, which lately happened, at the feat of Mr. B*****, near Berwick, justifies this remark. “My mowers,” says he, “cut a partridge on her nest, and immediately brought the eggs (fourteen) to the house. I ordered them to be put under a very large beautiful hen, and her own to be taken away. They were hatched in two days, and the hen brought them up perfectly well till they were five or six weeks old. During that time they were constantly kept confined in an outhouse, without having been seen by any of the other poultry. The door happened to be left open, and the cock got in. My house-
 S “keeper,

“ keeper, hearing her hen in distress,
“ ran to her assistance, but did not arrive
“ in time to save her life. The cock,
“ finding her with the brood of par-
“ tridges, fell upon her with the utmost
“ fury, and put her to death. The
“ house-keeper found him tearing her
“ both with his beak and spurs, although
“ she was then fluttering in the last
“ agony, and incapable of any resistance.
“ The hen had been, formerly, the cock’s
“ greatest favourite.”

A writer, of no inconsiderable merit,* has employed his muse, on a subject highly interesting to the English reader, in a didactic poem entitled the *Fleece*. In this work, whatever relates to the management of *sheep*, and the manufacture of wool, is largely discussed; and the whole is adorned by the introduction of rural imagery, and amusing digres-

* Mr. Dyer.

sions. But the performance might have been rendered much more entertaining, if it had comprehended a fuller account of the natural history of the sheep; and had displayed a nicer attention to the peculiar and pleasing character of that innocent animal, and of her sportive offspring. One fact should not have been omitted, in such a narrative; and I wonder it escaped Mr. Dyer's observation. I am informed, that, after the dam has been shorn, and turned into the fold to her lambs, they become estranged to her, and that a scene of reciprocal distress ensues; which a man, of lively imagination, and tender feelings, might render highly interesting and pathetic. The poor sheep, when undergoing the operation of washing, and also when stripped of her warm and graceful covering is, in both circumstances a spectacle, of pity, and a proper object of poetical amplification. Had Mr. Sterne been the

author of the Fleece, he would perhaps have introduced the following little episode. “Dear Sensibility! thou sometimes inspirest the rough peasant, who traverses the bleakest mountains.—He finds the lacerated lamb of another’s flock. This moment I beheld him, leaning his head against his crook, with piteous inclination looking down upon it.—Oh! had I come one moment sooner!—It bleeds to death.—His gentle heart bleeds with it.—Peace to thee, generous swain! I see thou walkest off with anguish; but thy joys shall balance it. For happy is thy cottage;—and happy is the sharer of it;—and happy are the lambs, which sport about thee!”

SMOKE, issuing from the chimney of a retired cottage, shaded with trees, is a pleasing object. The waving line of beauty, in which it gradually ascends,
and

and the succession of graceful forms, which it assumes, before it is lost in the atmosphere, adapts it to poetical description or comparison, as well as to the canvas of the painter. Mr. Dyer, in the poem above referred to, has thus represented its appearance, and associated with it ideas of comfort and plenty, which tend to heighten the complacency of the beholder.

Yet your mild homesteads, ever blooming smile
Among embracing woods, and waft on high
The breath of plenty, from the ruddy tops
Of chimneys, curling o'er the gloomy trees,
In airy, azure ringlets, to the sky.*

The FLOATING MISTS, which are seen on the tops and sides of hills, often put on a variety of agreeable shapes and colours. They constitute an interesting part of the scenery of Ossian's poems ;

* Dyer's Fleece, Book I. line 509.

and are introduced, with peculiar propriety, as objects which, in a mountainous country, were continually within the view of his *dramatis personæ*. “ The
 “ mist of Cromla curls upon the rock,
 “ and shines to the beam of the west.
 “ The soft mist pours over the silent vale.
 “ The green flowers are filled with dew.
 “ The sun returns in his strength; and
 “ the mist is gone.” These beautiful forms suggest, to a devout mind, conversant with the writings of Milton, part of Adam’s morning invocation.

Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
 From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
 In honour to the world’s great Author rise,
 Whether to deck with clouds th’ uncoloured sky,
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
 Rising or falling, still advance his praise.*

The expression *steaming lake*, in the second line, is used with the strictest philosophical

* Milton, Book V.

truth. Thomson has applied the same epithet, with equal justness, to that intestine motion in the earth, by which Divine Providence

Works in the secret deep, shoots *steaming* thence
The fair profusion, that o'erspreads the spring.

For it appears, from some late experiments, that sixteen hundred gallons of water rise, by evaporation, from an acre of ground, within the space of twelve hours, of a summer's day.*

An inattentive observer of nature would hardly remark the CURVILINEAR DIRECTION, in the motion of animals. Yet certain it is, that neither birds, fishes, insects, quadrupeds, nor men, ever move long in a straight line. The final cause of this seems to be, that ease may be alternately given to the muscles, on the

* Watson's Chemical Essays, Vol. III. p. 52.

right and on the left side of the body. When the muscles of the right side are in a state of vigorous exertion, the direction of the body will incline that way; and when they require relief, those of the left side come into action, and produce an opposite effect. Whoever follows a draught horse heavily laden, will perceive the truth of this observation. And it is not more apparent on the beaten highway, than in the sheep-tracks on the heath, and in the paths, worn by the passage of cattle to their watering places. Hence it is a rule, in the art of gardening, that walks and pleasure grounds should be serpentine; as that form is most agreeable to nature, and therefore most consonant to an elegant and improved taste.

Milton makes frequent mention of the FLAMING SWORDS, borne by the angelic spirits, and particularly by the cherubims,

bims, who were stationed at the gate of Paradise.

And on the east side of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
Cherubic watch; and of a sword, the flame
Wide waving, all approach far off to fright,
And guard all passage to the tree of life.*

If the Poet had been acquainted with the modern discoveries in electricity, he might perhaps have seized this occasion of exerting his superior talents for description, by a more minute and pictorial display of *the sword of flame wide waving*. The reader, at least, may assist his imagination to conceive a more lively idea of it, by the following beautiful experiment.

Make a torricellian *vacuum*, in a glass tube, about three feet long, and seal it

* Paradise Lost, Book XI, line 120.

hermetically.

hermetically. Let one end of this tube be held in the hand, and the other applied to the electrical conductor; and immediately the whole tube will be illuminated, and when taken from the conductor, will continue luminous for a considerable time. If it be then drawn through the hand, the light will be uncommonly intense, from end to end, without the least interruption. After this operation, which discharges it in a great measure, it will still flash at intervals, though held only at one extremity, and quite still. But if it be grasped by the other hand, at the same time, in a different place, strong flashes of light will dart from one extremity to the other, and continue to do so twenty-four hours, or perhaps longer, without fresh excitation.*

* See Dr. Priestley's Hist. of Electricity, p. 540.

The foregoing experiment was made by Mr. Canton, to elucidate the nature of the Aurora Borealis, a phenomenon well suited to exercise the fancy of the poet. But still more congenial to him are those illusive meteors, which sometimes occur in northern climates; and which, literally, give “to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.” “I was “never more surpris’d,” says Crantz, in his History of Greenland, “than on a “fine warm summer’s day, to perceive “the islands, that lie four leagues west “of our shore, putting on a form quite “different from what they are known “to have. As I stood gazing upon them, “they appeared at first infinitely greater “than what they naturally are; and “seemed as if I viewed them through “a large magnifying glass. They were “thus not only made larger, but brought “nearer to me: I plainly descried every “stone upon the land, and all the furrows
“ filled

“ filled with ice. When this deception
“ had lasted for a while, the prospect
“ seemed to break up, and a new scene
“ of wonder to present itself. The islands
“ seemed to travel to the shore, and
“ represented a wood, or a tall cut hedge.
“ The scene then shifted, and shewed
“ the appearance of all sorts of curious
“ figures; as ships with sails, streamers,
“ and flags, antique elevated castles with
“ decayed turrets; and a thousand forms,
“ for which fancy found a resemblance
“ in nature. When the eye had been
“ satisfied with gazing, the whole group
“ seemed to rise in air, and at length
“ vanish into nothing. At such times,
“ the air is quite serene and clear;
“ but compressed with subtle vapours; and
“ these, appearing between the eye and
“ the object, give it all that variety of
“ appearances, which glasses, of different
“ refrangibilities, would have done.”*

* See Goldsmith's History of the Earth, Vol. I.

However marvellous this narrative may appear to a phlegmatic reader, it will not seem incredible to the poet, whose fancy can form a still brighter, and more gay creation, without the aid of aerial refractions or reflections. And if these fictions deviate not too far from verisimilitude, they agreeably agitate the mind with the mixed emotions of surprise and delight. But, in delineations of nature, they have no legitimate place; and the judgment rejects, with disgust, whatever falsifies the truth of description, by its obvious incongruity. Myrtle groves, perennial springs, unfading flowers, and odoriferous gales, the hackneyed Arcadian scenery, accord not with an English landscape. And equally unfuitable, to the views of this country, are the spicy beauties, and pearly treasures of the East. Yet Milton, in his *Comus*, thus addresses the goddesses of the Severn;

May thy billows roll ashore,
The beryl, and the golden ore!
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower, and terrace round;
And here and there, thy banks upon,
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

But the poet is not, upon all occasions, to be confined within the precise boundaries of truth. What writer, of lively fancy, in describing a morning walk on the banks of Kefwick, would not embellish the beauty of the scene by introducing the MELODY of BIRDS; and thus add the charms of music to all the enchantments of vision. Yet, I believe, there is not a feathered songster to be found in those delightful vales; probably, owing to the terror inspired by the birds of prey, which abound on the mountains that surround them. At Grange, about four miles from the lake, there is an eagle's eyrie. The nest is circular, composed of twigs twisted together;

gether; and is more than a yard in diameter. The eagles, which inhabit it, are of the species called the erne, or the vulture *Albicilla*, of Linnæus. And they are said to commit great destruction amongst the hares, partridges, grouse, and even lambs of that district.*

I cannot close this Essay, without making an apology for the freedom of my strictures on poetical demerit. And I feel a peculiar diffidence with respect to my animadversions on a poet, who is justly the boast and glory of Britain. To pluck a leaf from the brow of Milton, may be deemed a sacrilegious attempt to injure the laurels of our country: But it should be recollected, that error is most dangerous, when dignified by high example; and that it is no disparagement to genius, however exalted,

* See Mr. Gray's Tour to the Lakes,

to ascribe to it, some portion of that imperfection, which is the common allotment of humanity.

A

T R I B U T E

TO THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF MANCHESTER.

T

OCTOBER 30th, 1782.

*A*T a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY of MANCHESTER, the following resolution passed unanimously.

“*The Members of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY lamenting, with heartfelt concern, the death of their late much honoured brother, CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq; unanimously resolve, that DR. PERCIVAL be requested to draw up a grateful and respectful Tribute to his Memory; to be inserted in the journals of the Society, with a view to record his distinguished merit, and to prolong the influence of his bright example.*”

NOVEMBER 13th, 1782.

At a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, it was resolved unanimously, “That the Thanks of the Society be returned to DR. PERCIVAL, for his Tribute to the Memory of CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq; and that he be desired to print the same.”

A

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF

CHARLES DE POLIÈR, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF MANCHESTER.

THE contemplation of moral and intellectual excellence affords the most pleasing and instructive exercise, to a well constituted mind. By exalting our ideas of the human character, it expands and heightens the principle of benevolence; and at the same time is favourable to piety, by raising our views to the supreme Author of all that is fair and good in man. The wise and the virtuous have ever dwelt, with delight, on the meritorious talents and dispositions of their fellow-creatures: And an

amiable philosopher drew, from this source, such sweet consolations, under the toils and distresses of life, that he warmly recommends the practice to our imitation. “*When you would recreate yourself,*” says M. Antoninus, “*reflect on the laudable qualities of your acquaintance: On the magnanimity of one, the modesty of another, or the liberality of a third.*”* Generous meditation! which every one, present, may indulge; and, by indulging, assimilate, to his own nature, the various perfections of others; transfusing, as it were, into his breast, the virtues which he contemplates.

But can we engage ourselves in such an exercise, without the most lively recollection of our late honoured and beloved colleague? His image presents itself before us; and we instantly recognise the agreeableness of his form, the animation of his countenance, the vigour of

* M. Antonin. Lib. VI.

his understanding, and the goodness of his heart. How graceful was his address; how sprightly, entertaining, and intelligent his conversation! What rich stores of knowledge did he display; what facility in the use, what judgment in the application of them! Few have been the subjects of discussion in this Society, which his observations have not enlightened: And what he could not himself elucidate, he has enabled others to do, by the pertinency of his queries, and the sagacity of his conjectures. So quick was his penetration; so enlarged his comprehension; so exact the arrangement of his intellectual treasures! Learning, with some, is the parent of mental obscurity; and the multiplicity of ideas, which have been acquired by severe study, serve only to produce perplexity and confusion. But Mr. de Polier's thoughts were always ready at command. And he engaged, with perspicuity, on every topic of discourse; because he saw,

at one view, all its relations and analogies to those branches of knowledge, with which he was already acquainted. With such felicity of genius, he was continually making large accessions to his stock of science, without laborious researches, or seclusion from the social enjoyments of life.

Of his abilities as a writer, he furnished us with a striking proof, in the Dissertation he delivered, last winter ;* which is equally distinguished by the justness of its sentiments, and the purity of its diction ; and fully displays his perfect attainment, both of the idiom and embellishments of the English language.

But Mr. de Polier had merits, more estimable than those, which he derived from the vivacity of his fancy, the elegance of his taste, or the powers of his

* On the pleasure which the mind receives, from the *exercise* of its faculties, and particularly that of *taste*.

understanding. And his friends will cordially unite with me in testifying, that, if honoured for his *intellectual*, he was beloved for his *moral* endowments. His heart was open to every generous sympathy; and the sensibility of his nature so enlivened all his perceptions, that the ordinary duties of social intercourse were performed, by him, with a warmth, almost equal to that of friendship. Nor was this the artificial deportment of unmeaning courtesy; but the generous effusion of a heart, which felt for all mankind. In such *philanthropy*, politeness has its true foundation: And of this joint grace of nature and education, “which aids and strengthens Virtue
“where it meets her, and imitates her
“actions, where she is not,” our lamented brother was a bright example. So engaging were his manners, and at the same time so sincere his disposition, that we may apply to him, with *honour*, what Cicero meant as a *reproach*; that

he was qualified, *cum tristibus severe, cum remissis jucunde, cum senibus graviter, cum juventute comiter vivere.* These powers of pleasing flowed from no servile compliances, nor ever led him into criminal indulgences. As a companion, he was convivial without intemperance, and gay without levity or licentiousness. His conversation was sprightly and unreserved; but, in the most unguarded hours of mirth, exempt from all indecency and profaneness. And the sallies of his wit and pleasantry were so seasoned with good humour, that they gave delight, unmixed with pain, even to those who were the objects of them. If the coarser pleasures of the bottle be banished from our tables; or if rational conversation, and delicacy of behaviour, with the sweet society of the softer sex, be now substituted in their room, this happy revolution has been rendered more complete by the influence of Mr. de Polier.

But

But though URBANITY, according to the most liberal interpretation of that term, was the *characteristic* of our excellent colleague, he possessed other endowments, of more intrinsic value. And I could enlarge, with pleasure, on his nice sense of rectitude, his inviolable integrity, and sacred regard to truth. These moral virtues were, in him, founded on no fictitious principle of *honour*, but resulted from the constitution of his mind; and were strengthened by habit, regulated by reason, and sanctioned by religion. For, notwithstanding, the veil which he chose to cast over his *piety*, it was manifest to his intimate friends; and may be recollected by others, who have marked the seriousness, with which he discoursed, on every subject relative to the being and attributes of GOD. Defective indeed must be the character of that man, who can discern and acknowledge, without venerating the divine perfections; and partake of the

the

the bounties of nature, yet feel no emotions of gratitude towards its benevolent Author. “ *A little philosophy,*” says lord Verulam, “ *may incline the mind to atheism;* “ *but depth in philosophy will bring it about* “ *again to religion.*”*

I have thus attempted to draw a rude sketch of the features, of our late honoured friend. A fuller delineation might furnish a more pleasing picture to strangers; but, to the members of this society, a few outlines will suffice to revive the image of the beloved original. This image, I trust, will be long and forcibly impressed on our minds; and that every one, here present, may adopt the language of Tacitus, on a similar occasion. “ *Quicquid ex Agricola amavimus, quicquid*

* The noble author subjoins a just reason, for this observation. “ For while the mind of man,” says he, “ looketh upon “ *second causes* scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and “ go no farther: But when it beholdeth the chain of them “ linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity.”

BACON'S Essay on Atheism.

“ *mirati sumus, manet, mansurumque est in*
 “ *animis hominum.*” “ Whatever in
 “ Agricola was the object of our love
 “ and of our admiration, remains, and
 “ will remain, in the hearts of all who
 “ knew him.”

Having taken a short view of the character of Mr. de Polier, curiosity and attachment concur in prompting us, to extend the retrospect; and we become solicitous to know something of his connections and education; and to trace the leading events of a life, in the conclusion of which we have been so deeply interested. But our friend was no egotist; and the zeal with which he entered into the concerns of others, precluded the detail of his own. I must content myself, therefore, with presenting to the society, the following brief memoirs.

Charles de Polier Bottens was the son
 of the Reverend — de Polier Bottens,
 Dean.

Dean of the Cathedral Church of Lausanne, Prefident of the Synod of the Pais de Vaud, Member of the Society of Arts and Sciences at Manheim, and citizen of Geneva. He was born at Lausanne, in the year 1753; and received the first part of his education, in the public schools of that city. As soon as he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of the classics, he was sent to an academy near Cassel, in Germany; from whence, after a residence of two years, he was removed to the university of Gottingen. In this celebrated seat of learning, he passed three years; and being then inclined to a military life, he obtained a lieutenant's commission in the Swiss regiment of D'Erlact, in the French service. But he soon resigned his commission, and returned to Lausanne; where he had a command given him, in one of the Provincial regiments of dragoons. In this situation, his connection commenced with the Earl of Tyrone; who offered him the tuition of his eldest son,

Lord

Lord le Poer, on terms equally honourable and advantageous. But before the engagement was completed, propofals were made to him by the duke of Saxe Gotha, to become governor to the hereditary prince, with an annuity, for life, of twelve hundred rixdollars; an apartment at court; and the post of chamberlain, or rank of colonel. These propofals, however, he declined in favour of lord Tyrone. And he executed the important trust, assigned to him, with such judgment, tendernefs, and fidelity, as induced that respectable nobleman to commit three of his children to his sole direction. These amiable youths he brought to England, in the summer of 1779; and settled them at the school of a clergyman in Manchester, who is eminently distinguished by his virtues as a man, and abilities as a teacher.

At this period, our first acquaintance with Mr. de Polier was formed. By the

the laws of hospitality, he was entitled to our attention, as a stranger. But his personal accomplishments, and the charms of his conversation, soon superseded the ordinary claims of custom, and converted formal civility into esteem and friendship. He became our companion in pleasure; our assistant in study; our counsellor in difficulty; and our solace in distress. Amusement acquired a dignity and zest, by his participation; and he softened the austerity of philosophy, whenever he joined in the pursuit. The institution, which now celebrates his memory, owes to him much of its popularity and success; and, so long as it subsists, his name will be revered, as one of its founders and most shining ornaments.

About the middle of last winter he was attacked by a complaint, which at first gave no disturbance to the vital functions. But being aggravated by the
fatigues

fatigues of a long journey to Holyhead, and of a voyage from thence to Dublin, at a time when he laboured under the *Influenza*, his malady rapidly increased after his arrival in Ireland; and put a final period to his valuable life on the 18th of October 1782.* The vigour of his faculties, and the warmth of his affections, continued even to the hour of his dissolution. And the amiableness of his behaviour, in the closing scene of trial and suffering through which he passed, gave such completion to his character, that we may apply to him, what the Poet has said of Mr. Addison;

--- He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.†

On this affecting event, I cannot express your feelings and my own, in terms so forcible as those of the animated his-

* At CURRAGHMORE, near WATERFORD, the seat of the Earl of Tyrone.

† Tickell's Poem on the Death of Addison.

torian, whom I have before quoted. *Si quis piorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore exstinguuntur magnæ animæ; placide quiescas, nosque ab infirmo desiderio, ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri, neque plangi fas est! Admiratione te potius temporalibus laudibus, et si natura suppeditet, militum decoramus!** “If there be any
 “ habitation for the shades of the virtu-
 “ ous; if, as philosophers suppose, ex-
 “ alted souls do not perish with the body;
 “ may you repose in peace, and recall
 “ us from vain regret, to the contem-
 “ plation of your virtues, which allow
 “ no place for mourning or complaint!
 “ Let us adorn your memory, rather,
 “ by a fixed admiration, and, if our
 “ natures will permit, by an imitation
 “ of your excellent qualities, than by
 “ temporary eulogies!” †

* Tacit. Vit. Agricolæ.

† See Mr. Aikin's Translation of the Life of Agricola.

A N

A P P E N D I X

T O T H E

S O C R A T I C D I S C O U R S E ;

C O N T A I N I N G

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y R E M A R K S ,

A N D I L L U S T R A T I O N S .

U

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

As the Socratic mode of discussion admits not of interruption by notes, the author has chosen to insert, in this place, such additional REMARKS and ILLUSTRATIONS, concerning the subject matter of the discourse on TRUTH, as further reading or reflection have suggested to his mind.

A N

A P P E N D I X

T O T H E

S O C R A T I C D I S C O U R S E ;

C O N T A I N I N G

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y R E M A R K S ,

A N D I L L U S T R A T I O N S .

I. TRUE AND FALSE HONOUR.*

THERE is a principle of HONOUR, which seems to be, in some measure, distinct from that of virtue, and originates from the association of certain ideas of propriety, or pride, with rectitude of conduct. Amongst the ancient

* See page 11.

Greeks and Romans, Virtue and Honour were deified; and a joint altar was consecrated to them at Rome. But afterwards each of them had separate temples; so connected, however, that no one could enter the temple of honour, without passing through that of virtue.

The genuine principle of honour, in its full extent, may be defined, a quick perception, and lively feeling of moral obligation, particularly with respect to probity and truth, in conjunction with an acute sensibility to shame, reproach, or infamy. But in different characters, these two constituent parts of the principle are found to exist in proportions so widely diversified, as, sometimes, to appear almost single and detached. The former always *aids and strengthens virtue*; the latter may, occasionally, *imitate her actions*,* when fashion happily countenances,

* Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,

nances, or high example prompts to rectitude. But being connected, for the most part, with a jealous pride, and capricious irritability, it will be more shocked with the *imputation*, than with the *commission* of what is wrong. And thus it will constitute that spurious honour, which, by a perversion of the laws of association, *puts evil for good, and good for evil*; and, under the sanction of a name, perpetrates crimes without remorse, and even without ignominy. To this empirical morality *duelling* owes its rise, which, with a fatal confidence, pretends to cure the indecorums of social intercourse, whilst it destroys the lives of individuals, subverts the peace of families, and violates the most sacred laws of the community. It is astonishing that a practice, which originated in the dark ages of ignorance,

That aids and strengthens Virtue where it meets her,
 And imitates her actions where she is not :
 It ought not to be sported with.

ADDISON'S Cato.

superstition, and disorder, should be continued in this enlightened period, though condemned by the polity of every state, and utterly repugnant to the spirit, and precepts of Christianity. The ancient Germans, Danes, and Franks, were used to decide criminal questions of fact, in the last resort, by combat. But this method of trial, about the close of the fifth century, was restrained to the following conditions. 1. That the crime, for which it was instituted, should be capital. 2. That it should be certain, that the crime had been perpetrated. 3. That the accused, by common fame, should be supposed guilty. 4. That the matter should not be capable of proof by witnesses. A custom, thus regulated, appears wise and equitable, in comparison with modern duelling, which has seldom any object, but the redress of fantastic wrongs, or the display of resentment, that often subsides before its execution. Is there a man of probity and humanity,
and

and many of this character, I am persuaded, have been seduced by the illusions of false honour, who, if not prohibited by law, would think himself authorised to call forth his antagonist, place him as a mark, and appoint a ruffian to fire a pistol at him, because, in the heat of argument, or in the unguarded hours of convivial mirth, he has committed some trifling offence, or verbal incivility? And is it not adding the most egregious folly to injustice, to undertake himself this opprobrious office, at the hazard of his own life, and to the ruin, perhaps, of his dearest connections? For, I presume, it now forms no part of the creed of the duellist, that Divine Providence will interpose, on such occasions, to preserve the injured, and to punish the aggressor.

The military spirit, which a long war has revived amongst the inhabitants of this country, and which the armed affo-

ciations, established in different places, cannot fail to foster and support, may, perhaps, contribute to multiply challenges, and to extend the practice of single combat. Courage is so essential to the character of a soldier, that it becomes magnified in his estimation, far beyond its real desert: And he is not only in danger of mistaking its true nature, and proper object, but of acquiring a contempt for every virtue, which, in his perverted judgment, stands in competition with it. Like Achilles, *jura negat sibi nata; nihil non arrogat armis*. Reason and religion should, therefore, exert their united authority, to check the influence of such baneful errors: And law should rigorously punish, with disgrace and infamy, the man, who can sacrifice humanity to pride, and justice to the specious counterfeit of gallantry.

I shall close this section with the following passage, from the celebrated
Commen-

Commentaries of Sir William Blackstone.
 “ Express malice is, when one, with a
 “ sedate, deliberate mind, and formed
 “ design, doth kill another; which formed
 “ design is evidenced by external cir-
 “ cumstances discovering that inward
 “ intention; as, lying in wait, antecedent
 “ menaces, former grudges, and con-
 “ certed schemes to do him some bodily
 “ harm. This takes in the case of deli-
 “ berate duelling, where both parties
 “ meet, avowedly, with an intent to
 “ murder; thinking it their duty as
 “ gentlemen, and claiming it as their
 “ right, to wanton with their own lives,
 “ and those of their fellow-creatures;
 “ without any warrant or authority, from
 “ any power, either human or divine,
 “ but in direct contradiction to the laws
 “ both of GOD and man: And there-
 “ fore, the law has justly fixed the crime
 “ and punishment of murder, on them,
 “ and on their seconds also.” *

* Book IV. Chap. 14.

 II. FALSE MAXIMS OF MORALITY.*

THE history of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, admirably exemplifies the folly and danger of adopting FALSE MAXIMS OF MORALITY. From the variety of instances, which offer themselves, in the memoirs of this romantic nobleman, I shall select the following. During his abode at the duke of Montmorency's, about twenty-four miles from Paris, it happened, one evening, that a daughter of the dutchess de Ventadour, of about ten or eleven years of age, went to walk in the meadows with his lordship, and several other gentlemen and ladies. The young lady wore a knot of ribband on her head, which a French chevalier snatched away, and fastened to his hat-band. He was desired to return it, but

* See page 13.

refused.

refused. The lady then requested lord Herbert to recover it for her. A race ensued; and the chevalier, finding himself likely to be overtaken, made a sudden turn, and was about to deliver his prize to the young lady, when lord Herbert seized his arm, and cried out, “I give it you.” “Pardon me,” said the lady, “it is he who gives it me.” “Madam,” replied lord Herbert, “I will not contradict you; but if the chevalier do not acknowledge, that I constrain him to give the ribband, I will fight with him.” And the next day he sent him a challenge, “being bound thereunto,” says he, “by the oath taken when I was made knight of the bath.”

He relates, also, three other similar cases, to shew, *how strictly he held himself to his oath of knighthood.* “This oath,” says the ingenious editor of lord Herbert’s life, “is one remnant of a superstitious
“ and

“ and romantic age, which an age, call-
 “ ing itself enlightened, still retains.
 “ The solemn service at the investiture
 “ of the knights, which has not the least
 “ connection with any thing holy, is
 “ a piece of the same profane pageantry.
 “ The oath being no longer supposed
 “ to bind, it is strange mockery to in-
 “ voke heaven on so trifling an occasion.”
 And it would be more strange, if each
 knight, like the misguided lord Herbert,
 should think himself obliged to cut a
 man’s throat, whenever a young lady
 loses her top-knot !

These religious engagements are so
 often misapplied, that it cannot be un-
 reasonable, to enter into a brief discussion
 of their true nature and obligation. A
 vow may be defined, *a devout promise made
 to GOD, respecting either the performance,
 or omission, of some voluntary act*; and is
 often accompanied with an imprecation
 of Divine vengeance, on the infraction
 of

of it. The only legitimate use of such an engagement is, to increase our abhorrence of what is evil, and to confirm our resolution in the more arduous pursuits of virtue. It cannot, therefore, be applied to the neglect of any antecedent duty, or to the accomplishment of any impious or immoral purpose. Were it otherwise, these arbitrary ties might be made a plea for violating every law, whether human or divine. Even prudence, in certain cases, is of sufficient force to supersede the validity of a vow. Thus, if the superstitious parent of a numerous and helpless family were, in some pressing danger, to invoke the assistance of Heaven, by the most solemn avowal of his resolution, to give all his substance to the church, or to the poor; such an absurd intention has not the nature of an engagement, and is void in itself. For, we are assured, that the execution of it could never prove acceptable to a wise and benevolent Deity,

with

with whom alone the contract was made. But this reasoning does not extend to rash and injurious bargains; or to promises of a social nature, which have been confirmed by an oath. For, as the maintenance of faith is of the highest importance in the commerce of life, to add impiety to the breach of it, must certainly be deemed an aggravation of the offence. And in such instances *the good man changeth not, though he swear to his own hurt.*

III. FEALTY TO MAGISTRATES.*

THE COMMANDS of the MAGISTRATE, or of the LEGISLATURE, are not binding, when they oppose the known and acknowledged obligations of morality. And the younger Cato has been justly censured, for engaging in the execution,

* See page 14.

of what he himself deemed a violent and most oppressive sentence, against Ptolemy, king of Cyprus. This prince was brother to the king of Egypt; and reigned by the same right of hereditary succession. He was in full peace and amity with Rome; and was accused of no practices, nor suspected of any designs, against the republic. But the infamous Clodius, who was then tribune, proposed and obtained the law, from motives of private pique and revenge. To give a sanction to it, Cato was charged with its fulfilment; and undertook the commission, though contrary to all his ideas of justice and rectitude. I believe no moralist, of the present times, will admit the validity of Cicero's apology, for the misconduct of his friend. "The
" commission," says he, " was designed
" not to adorn, but to banish Cato;
" not offered, but imposed upon him.
" Why then did he obey it? For the
" same reason, that he *swore to obey*
" other

“ other laws, which he knew to be un-
 “ just; that he might not expose himself
 “ to the fury of his enemies, or, by a
 “ fruitless pertinacity, deprive the re-
 “ public of his services.” *Orat. pro*
Sexto.

The conduct of SCIPIO AFRICANUS, in the destruction of the brave Numantines, is equally reprehensible. For it is confessed, by Lucius Florus, that the Romans commenced hostilities against that people, without even a pretence to render them justifiable. And the horrid barbarities, exercised in the siege of Numantia, excite peculiar indignation, from the unparalleled fortitude and vigour, which the inhabitants displayed, in the defence of their liberties. Such bravery, exerted in a cause so noble, merited the patronage, and should have called forth the clemency, not the resentment, of Scipio. But the Romans appear to have entertained no consistent ideas, concerning

concerning the privileges of other nations, or the common rights of mankind. They proudly arrogated to themselves the government of the world; and the maxim, *regere imperio populos*,* was the plea for every conquest. This principle pervades the writings of all their poets and historians: And even the philosophical TACITUS, in delivering the memoirs of Agricola, expresses not the slightest disapprobation, of the numerous, and destructive expeditions into Britain. Yet he has, inadvertently, put into the mouth of Galgacus, one of the chieftains of our warlike ancestors, such sentiments, as may be deemed a stigma on his venerable father-in-law, for obedience to imperial mandates, founded on cruelty and injustice. *Raptores orbis, postquam cuncta vastantibus defuere, terra, et mare scrutantur: Si locuples hostis*

* *Tu, REGERE IMPERIO POPULOS, Romane memento,*
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos. VIRG.

*est, avari; si pauper, ambitiosi. Quos non oriens, non occidens satiaverit: Soli omnium, opes atque inopiam, pari affectu concupiscunt. Auferre, trucidare, rapere falsis nominibus, imperium; atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem apellant.**

“ These plunderers of the world, after
 “ exhausting the land by their devas-
 “ tations, are rifling the ocean: stimu-
 “ lated by avarice, if their enemy be
 “ rich; by ambition, if poor: Unfa-
 “ tiated by the east, and by the west:
 “ The only people, who behold wealth
 “ and indigence with equal avidity: To
 “ ravage, to slaughter, to usurp, under
 “ false titles, they call empire: And when
 “ they make a desert, they call it peace.” †

Modern conquests have been founded on claims equally invalid and tyrannical, with those of the Romans. It is a satire

* Tacit. Vit. Agric.

† Aikin's Translation of the Life of Agricola.

on human reason, and still more disgraceful to the moral feelings of mankind, to review the principles, on which the Spaniards affected to establish their rights to the extensive dominions in the new world. Their generals were instructed to notify, with great formality, to the innocent and ignorant natives of the western hemisphere, that St. Peter had subjected the universe to the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff; and that this lord of the whole creation had made a grant of the islands, of the *Terra Firma*, and of the ocean, to the Catholic Kings of Castile. To these monarchs they were required to subject themselves; and, if they refused, the most exemplary vengeance was denounced against them. They were threatened to be despoiled of their wives and children, to have their country ravaged, and to be themselves sold for slaves.*

* See Herrera, Dec. I. Lib. 7, Cap. 14. also Robertson's History of America, note 23.

Instances, like these, afford the most irrefragable evidence, that fealty to magistrates must always be regarded, as a conditional obligation; and that implicit obedience to their commands may involve us in high degrees of guilt and infamy.

IV. FALSE OPINIONS CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP.*

MANY of the ancients appear to have entertained very enthusiastic notions of FRIENDSHIP; and to have supposed, that it supersedes, in particular circumstances, both wisdom and prudence, and every species of moral obligation. When Blossius, the bosom companion of the elder Gracchus, was summoned before the senate of Rome, after the tumult which proved fatal to that tribune, he was interrogated, whether

* See page 19.

he had always obeyed the commands of Gracchus? “Yes,” answered Blossius, “most punctually, for so I thought it my duty to do. And, if it had been possible for him to desire me to fire the Capitol, I should not have scrupled to comply, from my full confidence in his rectitude.”* The folly and criminality of such a blind sacrifice of reason and judgment to the will of another, are too obvious to need any comment. Connections, of this servile nature, merit not the honourable appellation of friendship. And we may justly adopt the opinion, which Cicero has delivered, concerning them: *Si omnia facienda sint, quæ amici velint, non AMICITIÆ tales sed CONJURATIONES putandæ sunt.*†

Not less foreign to the true obligations of this amiable and venerable passion,

* Plut. Vit. Gracchi.

† Cic. de Off.

----- The friendships of the world

Are oft confederacies in vice.

ADDISON'S CATO.

was the exclamation of Themistocles :
 “ God forbid, that I should sit upon a
 “ tribunal, where my friends were not
 “ more favoured than strangers !” The
 letter of king Agesilaus, to one of the
 Spartan judges, which Plutarch has pre-
 served, is a still more striking proof of
 the practical influence of the same false
 opinion ; because this prince was a man
 of probity and equity, virtues which
 belonged not to the Athenian statesmen.
 “ If Nicias be innocent,” says he, “ acquit
 “ him, for the sake of justice ; but, if he
 “ be guilty, acquit him, for the sake of
 “ my attachment to him.”* The Roman
 moralist, whom I have so lately quoted,
 very forcibly objects to the interference
 of friendship, in the magisterial functions :
 Yet, by a strange delusion, he permits
 an advocate to give a *plausible colouring*
 to the offence, with which his friend is
 charged ; and to place the fact in the

* Plut. in Vit. Agesilai.

most advantageous, though it should be a *false* light.* In his treatise *de Amicitia*, he remarks, that, “in cases, which affect
 “the life, or good fame of a friend, it
 “may be allowable to deviate, a little,
 “from what is *strictly right*, in order to
 “comply with his desires; provided,
 “however, that our own character be
 “not injured by it.” Such loose and erroneous maxims certainly merit animadversion. And I shall relate the following incident, which occurred several centuries before the period of Cicero, as an antidote to them. Chilo, the Lacedemonian, one of the sages of Greece, who is celebrated for the sentence, KNOW THYSELF, which he caused to be written, at Delphos, in letters of gold, is said to have addressed himself to his friends, when on his death bed, in terms to this effect. “I cannot, through the course
 “of a long life, look back, with uneasi-

* Cic. de Off. Lib. II. 14.

“ nefs, upon any fingle instance of my
“ conduct, unlefs, perhaps, on that, which
“ I am going to mention, wherein, I
“ confefs, I am ftill doubtful, whether
“ I acted properly or not. I was once
“ appointed judge, in conjunction with
“ two others, when my particular friend
“ was arraigned before us. Were the
“ laws to have taken their due courfe,
“ he muft, inevitably, have been con-
“ demned to die. After much debate,
“ therefore, with myfelf, I adopted this
“ expedient. I gave my own vote, ac-
“ cording to my confcience, but, at the
“ fame time, employed all my eloquence
“ to prevail with my affociates to abfolve
“ the criminal. Now I cannot but re-
“ flect upon this act, with concern, from
“ an apprehenfion, that there was fome-
“ thing of perfidy, in perfuading others
“ to go counter to what I myfelf efteemed
“ right.”*

* See fome judicious obfervations on this fubject, in Fitz-
ofborne’s Letters.

Tully's false ideas, concerning the privileges of friendship, betrayed him on several occasions, into meanness, and even immorality of conduct. In one of his letters, he earnestly solicits Atticus, to be guilty of prevarication, in his defence. It seems that he had written an invective oration, against an eminent senator, supposed to be Curio. The piece was designed only for the entertainment of a select party; but had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and been published by them. He wrote, therefore, to his friend, in the following terms. *Percussisti autem me de oratione prolata; cui vulneri, ut scribis, medere, si quid potes. ——— et, quia scripta mihi videtur negligentius, quam cæteræ, puto posses probare non esse meam.** “ You have
 “ shocked me with the news that my
 “ oration is made public. Heal the
 “ wound, if you possibly can. ———

* Ep. ad Attic. III, 12.

“ As it is written more negligently than
 “ my other orations, I think you may
 “ prove it *not to be mine.*” It is remark-
 able, that Tully should have made a re-
 quest, of this nature, to Atticus, who is
 said to have had such an abhorrence of
 deceit, that he never uttered a falsehood
 himself, nor could pardon it in another.
 Cicero’s letter to Luceius, requesting
 him to write the history of his life, “ and
 “ not to reject the generous partiality
 “ of friendship, *but to give more to affec-*
 “ *tion than to truth,*” is too well known to
 be recited here. *

But,

* In the intercourse of friendship, the Romans do not appear to have displayed much delicacy of sentiment. The passages, which I have quoted from Cicero, evince the truth of this observation. Horace affords a further confirmation of it, in the close of his beautiful address to Grosphus, Ode XVI. Lib. 2. And Pliny, in one of his familiar epistles (Ep. XIX. Lib. 1.) disgraces an act of the most exalted generosity, by the insult to amity, which accompanies it. “ Born,” says he to Romanus Firmus, “ in the same town, educated in the
 “ same school, and living together, from our early youth, in
 “ habits of strict connection, I feel the strongest motives to
 “ promote the advancement of your fortune and dignity. I
 “ send

But, extravagantly as many of the ancients have estimated friendship, a modern writer, of distinguished eminence, has rated it still higher; and does not hesitate to assert, that all the discourses on the subject, which are handed down to us, appear to him flat and low, in comparison with the sense, which he entertains of it. “This bond,” he says, “dissolves every antecedent obligation, and the secret, which I have sworn not to reveal to another, I may, without perjury, communicate to him, who

“send you, therefore, three hundred thousand sesterces, (£2421 sterling) to elevate you from the rank of Decurio, to that of a Roman Knight.” But he then adds, “From my knowledge of your character, it is unnecessary to admonish you to behave, in your new station, thus conferred by me, with the modesty, which becomes my beneficiary. For that honour should be solicitously preserved, in which the reputation of a benefactor is involved.” *Ego ne illud quidem admoneo, quod admonere deberem, nisi te scirem sponte facturum, ut dignitate à me data quam modestissime, ut a me data, utare. Nam sollicitius custodiendus est honor, in quo etiam beneficium amici tuendum est.*

“is not *another*, but *myself*.”* If the author of the *Internal Evidence of Christianity*† had confined himself to such unwarrantable ideas of friendship, when he divests it of the sanction of our divine Law-giver, there could be no difficulty in acquiescing in his decision. But an affection, so congenial to the principles of our religion, when properly governed, and judiciously directed, seems to merit, and, I trust, is not destitute of, evangelical support. Benevolence is, indeed, the great law of the Gospel dispensation; but it must have its commencement in the more confined and partial charities: And the man, who has felt not the appropriated regard of a son, a brother, a husband, or a friend, cannot have a heart capable of being expanded with philanthropy. Even piety itself originates from the filial relation, and we learn to transfer, to the Deity, that gratitude

* See Montaigne's *Essays*, Book I. Chap. 27.

† Soame Jenyns, Esq.

and veneration, with which the tender offices, and wisdom of our parents first inspired us. It is not the object of Christianity to overturn, but to regulate the œconomy of the human mind: And, if benevolence must have its foundation in private affection, the divine law, which directs the former, necessarily inculcates the latter.

That our Saviour himself experienced the tenderest sympathies of friendship, may, I think, be justly deduced, both from his strong attachment to John, the favourite disciple, and from the expressions of peculiar endearment, with which he performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. On this affecting occasion, the Evangelist relates, that *Jesus wept*: And so sensible were the Jews of the anguish of his soul, that they cried out, *Behold how he loved him!** And,

* John, Chapter xi. ver. 35, 36. See some admirable reflections on this subject, in the notes to Mr. Melmoth's translation of Lælius.

if Christ gave such a decisive proof of personal attachment and friendship, the history of the Gospel no less clearly evinces, that his disciples felt an affection of the same tender and peculiar kind, to their Divine Master. In the pathetic conversation, which passed, previous to the sufferings and death of Jesus, when he prophetically, but tenderly charged them with their future defection, Peter, in the warmth of his regard, replied, *though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* The bitter repentance of this Apostle, subsequent to the misconduct, which his great Master had predicted, affords a further display of the force of his friendship. And Christ himself, afterwards, honoured him with the kindest and most explicit acknowledgment of it. *So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me, more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him,*

*him, feed my lambs. He saith unto him again, the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my sheep. He saith unto him, the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep.**

In the interesting passage, here recited, that lively, reciprocal, and peculiar regard, which constitutes friendship, is not only recognised, but appealed to, and authorised, as a generous and animating principle of action. And, if the great Founder of our religion has nowhere expressly ordained it, as a duty, it is probably, because this virtue is of *special*, and not of *universal* obligation;

* John, Chap. xxi. ver. 15, 16, 17.

depending on particular relations, and contingent circumstances, which human power can seldom influence or command. It may be added, too, that the divine law presupposes the existence of such affections, as are purely natural and spontaneous; and directs its precepts, not to their production, but solely to their government and regulation. Hence, we find not, in the whole compass of the scriptures, one explicit injunction to parents, to love their children.* Yet, surely, this very essential moral office is not to be excluded from the catalogue of evangelical graces, notwithstanding the silence of sacred writ, concerning it. And the same plea may be extended to friendship, with due allowance for its rarer occurrence, and more partial obligation. The Christian, therefore, in perfect consistency with his

* See Dr. Ogden's sermon on the duty of parents to children, Vol. II. p. 157.

faith, may admire and imitate the examples of generous amity, which history and observation exhibit to his view. *Peradventure for a good man, says the Apostle, some might even dare to die.* And the sacrifice of our own ease, interest, or life itself, for the advantage of another, with whom we are connected by strong and peculiar ties, may not only be justifiable, but highly honourable and meritorious. Let it be remembered, however, that the privileges of friendship are subordinate to the rights of society; and that no attachment, merely personal, can warrant the violation of justice, fidelity, or truth.*

V. D I S P U-

* The ideas, which have been entertained of VALOUR, and the LOVE of our COUNTRY, are still more licentious than those above recited, concerning FRIENDSHIP. It should seem, that the understanding is dazzled by the splendour, which usually accompanies these virtues; and that they are estimated by the rarity of their occurrence, or by the elevated station of their possessors, rather than by the standard of intrinsic merit, or public utility. Justice and probity are slightly regarded,

 V. DISPUTATION.*

POLEMIC SKILL is a dangerous qualification; and, if not governed by charity, wisdom, and integrity, may betray the possessor, either into intemperate zeal, or absolute indifference for truth. Every object assumes an import-

as the *ordinary* duties of social life, equally incumbent on all ranks of men: And he, who practises them, appears to have no claim to more than common approbation. But great exertions of courage or patriotism, as they exceed the demands, so they proportionably excite the admiration of our fellow-citizens. This admiration kindles in the mind an enthusiasm, which often suspends, and sometimes suppresses the calmer principles of humanity, equity, and truth. And the hero or patriot is indulged in all the privileges, which he assumes; nothing being judged criminal, that promotes the personal glory of the one, or the ambitious views of the other. The history of all ages confirms the truth of these observations: But they are more particularly applicable to the records of antiquity; which, for the most part, celebrate the deeds of warriors and statesmen, with unqualified applause, and without the least discrimination of right and wrong.

* See page 102.

ance, in our estimation, proportioned, in some degree, to the labour and attention which we bestow upon it. And the same enthusiasm, that dignifies a butterfly or a medal to the virtuoso and the antiquary, may convert controversy into quixotism; and present, to the deluded imagination of the theological knight-errant, a barber's bason, as Mambrino's helmet.* The real value of any doctrine can only be determined, by its influence on the conduct of man, with respect to himself, to his fellow-creatures, or to God. And it has been well observed, by a writer, of distinguished abilities, that some kinds of error and superstition are so intimately connected with truth and virtue, as to render the separation of them impracticable, without doing violence to both. It is better, therefore, according to our Saviour's excellent advice,

* See Don Quixote.

to let a few tares grow up with the wheat, (if they be of such a nature, as to suffer the wheat to grow along with them,) than to endanger the destruction of the wheat, by rooting up the tares.*

Bigotry may be associated with truth, as well as with error: And this temper of mind is always unfavourable to piety and philanthropy, whatever be the principles on which it is founded. Erasmus asserts, that most of the reformers, with whom he was acquainted, became worse men, in consequence of the revolution, which they accomplished. I know not whether this fact will be admitted, on his authority. But certain it is, that the fury of zeal, and the acrimony of disputation, are neither consonant to the religion of nature, nor to the meek and peaceable spirit of the Gospel.

* See Priestley on the Sacrament, page 64.

But polemic skill is sometimes employed in the defence of opinions, which are known or believed to be false. And, by this practice, the understanding either becomes the dupe of its own impositions; or acquires that indifference to truth, which constitutes incurable scepticism, and sometimes terminates in the most fatal depravity. For he, who has learned to be regardless of right and wrong, in sentiment or in principle, can have no solicitude about the like distinctions, in his dispositions or behaviour. Such moral apathy gives full scope to every irregular desire, and vicious propensity. And, if it be associated with great intellectual endowments, a character may be formed, at once the glory and the disgrace of human nature. Sallust describes Catiline as *subdolus, varius, cujuslibet rei SIMULATOR ac DISSIMULATOR*. And I am inclined to believe, that the remarkable portrait of SERVIN, which the duke of Sully has drawn, owes some

of its most distinguishing features to the cause, here alluded to. “ Let the reader
 “ represent, to himself, a man of a genius
 “ so lively, and an understanding so extensive, as rendered him scarcely ignorant of any thing that could be known;
 “ of so vast and ready a comprehension,
 “ that he immediately made himself
 “ master of whatever he attempted; and
 “ of so prodigious a memory, that he
 “ never forgot what he had once learned.
 “ He possessed all parts of philosophy
 “ and the mathematics, particularly fortification and drawing. *Even, in Theology, he was so well skilled, that he was
 “ an excellent preacher, whenever he had a
 “ mind to exert that talent, and an able
 “ disputant, for and against the reformed religion indifferently.* He not only understood Greek, Hebrew, and all the
 “ languages, which we call learned, but
 “ also all the different jargons, or modern
 “ dialects. He also accented and pronounced them so naturally, and so
 “ perfectly

“ perfectly imitated the gestures and
“ manners, both of the several nations of
“ Europe, and the particular provinces
“ of France, that he might have been
“ taken for a native of all, or any of
“ these countries; and this quality he
“ applied to counterfeit all sorts of per-
“ sons, wherein he succeeded wonder-
“ fully. He was, moreover, the best
“ comedian and greatest droll, that, per-
“ haps, ever appeared. He had a genius
“ for poetry, and had written many
“ verses. He played upon almost all
“ instruments, was a perfect master of
“ music, and sung most agreeably and
“ justly. *He likewise could say mass; for*
“ *he was of a disposition to do, as well as*
“ *to know, all things.* His body was per-
“ fectly well suited to his mind; he was
“ light, nimble, dextrous, and fit for all
“ exercises: He could ride well; and in
“ dancing, wrestling, and leaping, he was
“ admired. There are not any recre-

“ and he was skilled in almost all me-
“ chanic arts. But, now for the reverse
“ of the medal : Here it appeared, that
“ he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly,
“ deceitful ; a liar, a cheat, a drunkard,
“ and a glutton ; a sharper in play, im-
“ mersed in every species of vice, a
“ blasphemer, an atheist. In a word,
“ in him might be found all the vices
“ contrary to nature, honour, religion,
“ and society ; the truth of which he
“ himself evinced with his latest breath ;
“ for he died, in the flower of his age,
“ in a common brothel, perfectly cor-
“ rupted by his debaucheries, and ex-
“ pired, with a glass in his hand, cursing
“ and denying GOD.”*

* See the Translation of Sully's Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 92.

VI. INDISCRIMINATE PLEADINGS OF LAWYERS.*

THE Roman orators undertook the defence of their clients, or dependents, in the courts of judicature, without fee or reward. And, under such circumstances, it might be supposed, that their pleadings would be regulated by the purest principles of justice or rectitude. But the fact was, frequently, far otherwise. Hortensius supported the cause of the infamous Verres: And even Cicero seems to have formed a design of undertaking that of Catiline, when he was brought to a trial, on account of his cruel and scandalous oppressions in Africa. For, in a letter to Atticus, he says, “It is my present intention to

* See page 108.

“ defend Catiline. We have judges to
 “ our mind; yet such as please the
 “ accuser himself. I hope, if he be ac-
 “ quitted, it will incline him to serve
 “ me in our common petition.”

Modern lawyers, in their ordinary practice, are governed by other motives, than those of ambition, or the desire of influence. Yet the profession, in its original establishment, appears to have disclaimed all mercenary considerations. And, even according to the laws, which now subsist, no counsellor can maintain an action for his fees, or so much as demand them, without doing wrong to his reputation.* He is liable, also, to a year's imprisonment, and to be condemned to perpetual silence, in the courts, if detected in the practice of deceit or collusion. †

* See Blackstone's Commentaries, Book III. Chap. 3.

† Statute Westm. I. 3 Edw. I. Chap. 28. Blackstone's Commentaries, Book III. Chap. 3.

How far the gentlemen of the bar have conformed themselves to this statute, I am not competent to determine. But Bishop Burnet relates, of the father of Sir Matthew Hale, that he had such strictness of conscience, as to lay down his profession, because he disapproved of the common mode of *giving colour, in pleadings*; which he thought a culpable deviation from truth. It is recorded also of Sir Matthew Hale himself, that, whenever he was convinced of the injustice of any cause, he would engage no farther in it, than to explain, to his client, the grounds of that conviction. His biographer says, that he abhorred the practice of misreciting evidences, quoting precedents or books falsely or unfairly, so as to deceive ignorant juries, or inattentive judges; and that he adhered to the same scrupulous sincerity in his pleadings, which he observed in the other transactions of his life. For, he used to say,

“ it

“ it was as great a dishonour, as a man
“ was capable of, that, for a little money,
“ he was to be hired to say or do, other-
“ wise than he thought.” *

* See British Biography, Vol. V. p. 383.

I N D E X.

A.

- A**BRAMHAM, instance of his courtesy, 63.
- AGESILAUS, his false ideas of friendship, 310.
- AGRICOLA, his moderation in science, 197.
- Allegiance*, when not binding, 14.
- Animals*, their subserviency to man, favourable to universal happiness, 207.
- ANTONINUS, MARCUS, his opinion concerning certain studies, 197. His reflections on the laudable qualities of his acquaintances, 276.
- APPENDIX, 291.
- ARRIA, story of, 47.
- ARTS, FINE, a general taste for them considered, 211. Imitative in their essence and origin, 213. When injurious to the mind, 218.
- Asserations*, rash and hasty, not binding, 12.
- Astronomy* furnishes sublime subjects for the poet, 238.
- ATHENIANS, instance of their detestation of perfidy, 56. Subsequent false maxims concerning public faith, 57.
- AURELIUS, MARCUS, his faith in the efficacy of a certain antidote to poisons, 176.

B.

- BACON, Lord, story of, 66.
 BARBAULD, Mrs. her description of the night, 242.
Beauty, physical and moral, their relation to each other, 204.
 BECCARIA, Marquis de, on the certainty of punishment, 21.
 BLACKSTONE, on the laws relative to duelling, 297.
 BLOSSIUS, fact concerning, 308.
 BOYLE, Mr. his piety and modesty, 114. His whimsical conceits in some of his theological writings, 155.
 BROWN, Mr. SIMON, curious account of, 127.

C.

- CARNEADES, story of, 106.
 CATO, the younger, censured, 302.
 CHESTERFIELD, Lord, on the prudent concealment of truth, 38.
 CHIAN-FU, story of, 32.
 CHILO, curious fact concerning, 311.
 CICERO, his solitary residence at Astura, 190. His loose maxims concerning friendship, 311. Influenced his conduct on several occasions, 313. Seems to have intended to support the cause of Catiline, 329.
Civility, forms of, considered, 59.
Cock, curious account of one, 257.
 COLUMBUS, stratagem of, 24.
Counsel and Reproof discussed, 69, 70.
Courtesy, 62.
Crocodile, improperly described by Dr. Young, 226.
 CROMWELL, OLIVER, story of, 88. His conduct discussed, 90, 91, 92.
Curvilinear direction, in the motion of animals, 263.

D.

- DIOGENES, story of, 65.
Disputation, 322.

I N D E X.

DORSO, CAIUS FABIVS, ſtory of, 82.
Duelling conſidered, 293.

E.

ELIZABETH, ſtory of, 36.
Equivocation, 44.

F.

Faith, what due to rogues and traitors, 28.
Faithfulneſs defined, 5.
Falſity in jeſt, conſidered, 40.
Falſhood defined, 5.
Faith to magiſtrates, conſidered, 302.
Fictions partake not of the nature of lies, 61.
Friendſhip, falſe opinions concerning, 308. Conſonant to the
 goſpel diſpenſation, 316.

G.

GALGACUS, a Britiſh chieftain, his ſpeech, 306.
Gentleneſs characteriſed, 67, 68.
 GIL BLAS, ſtory of Archbiſhop of Grenada, 70.
Goſpel, gives no direct encouragement to learning, 195.
Greenland, optical deceptions there, 267.

H.

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION, their influence conſidered, 117.
 HALE, Sir MATTHEW, never undertook an unjuſt cauſe, 331.
Harmony of the ſpheres, falſe hypotheſis concerning, 233.
 HENRY IV. of France, ſtory of, 15, 16, 17. His prepoſſeſſion
 in favour of aſtrology, 146.
 HERBERT, Sir RICHARD, ſtory of, 29.
 HERBERT, Lord, ſtory of, 85, 86, 298.
 HERCULES, judgment of, burleſqued, 159.

HILARIO,

I. N D E X.

- HILARIO, story of, 41.
Hypocrisy considered, 84.
 HOGARTH, his ludicrous turn of mind, 152.
 HOMER, his description of a moonlight and starry night, 241.
Honour, its influence, 11. True and false, considered, 291.
 HORTENSIUS, supported the cause of Verres, 329.

I.

- Jaundice*, does not paint objects yellow on the retina, 228.
Ideot, a curious story of, 122.
 JESUITS, their versatile opinions accounted for, 107.
 INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION IN LITERARY PURSUIT, 185.
Informers, why held in contempt, 77.
Inscription at the Leafowes in Warwickshire, 204.
Insincerity in religion, considered, 79.
Jocularity, when innocent, 44.
 JOHNSON, Dr. SAMUEL, his literary disappointments, 188.
Judicial Testimony, its importance, 20.

K.

- KENNEDIES, story of, 11.
 KESWICK, without singing birds, 270.

L.

- LAUZUN, Count de, story of, 209.
Lawyers, their indiscriminate pleadings, 329. Cannot support actions for their fees, 330.
 LOT, instance of his courtesy, 64.
Lunatic, account of, 134.
Lying defined, 5.

I N D E X.

M.

- MARLBOROUGH, Duke, story of, 55.
Man, constituted for two great ends, 192.
 MARY, Queen of Scotland, story of, 50.
 MIDDLETON, Dr. CONYERS, first stimulated to study by a
 sarcasm of Dr. Bentley, 141.
Misprision, of treason, 77.
Mists, assume poetical shapes, 261. Form an interesting part
 of the scenery of Ossian's Poems, 262.
Moorish Gentleman, story of, 9.
 MONTAIGNE, his extravagant notions of friendship, 315.
Moral powers, more circumscribed in their operation than the
 intellectual ones, 192.
Morality, false maxims of, considered, 298.
Muscular actions, from being spontaneous become automatic, 118.
Music considered, 213.

N.

- Negroes*, story of, 18.

O.

- Opinions*, false, not to be supported for the sake of arguments, 102.
Originality of character explained, 124.
 OSSIAN, his description of the night, 243.
 OUSAN-QUEY, 7.
Ox, not remarkable for large eyes, 226.

P.

- PÆTUS, CÆCINNA, story of, 47.
Painting considered, 213.
 PARE, story of, 80.
Parental Love, not expressly enjoined in the scriptures, 320.

Z

Parody

I N D E X,

Parody considered, 160.

PASCHAL, his astonishing powers of memory, 130. His
distempered imagination, 132. Further account of, 187.

Passion, ruling, how learning becomes, 196.

Patriotism, why so highly esteemed, 321.

PAUL, St. his prudent evasion at Athens, 37, 38. Dispute
with the apostle Peter, 94.

PENN, his liberality of sentiment, 166.

PETERBOROUGH, Earl, story of, 54.

Physician, in what circumstances he may deceive his patient, 46.

Piety, how much injured by ludicrous associations, 168.

PITCAIRN, Dr. story of, 151.

PLINY, disgraced an act of generosity, by the insult to friend-
ship, which accompanied it, 314.

Poetry considered, 214. On the alliance of natural history
and philosophy with it, 223.

POLIER, Mr. de, TRIBUTE to his memory, 273.

Politeness considered, 65.

POPE, remarks on his parodies, 161. His solicitude in the
prosecution of his literary works, 187.

Poultry, their habitudes, &c. 256.

Promise, when the breach of it a lie, 6, 7. Extorted by fear,
void, 31. To be performed according to the plain mean-
ing, 48.

Proper names, how the pronunciation of them affected by
palsy, 121.

Provost of Aberdeen, story of, 165.

Q.

Questions, when treacherous, how to be answered, 35.

Quakers, their character considered, 166.

I N D E X.

R.

RAYNAL, Abbè, story related by him, 18.

Religion, considered as a speculative science, and as a practical principle, 111.

Reproof and counsel, discussed, 69, 70.

Reservations, mental, 50.

ROMANS, story of ten, taken by Hannibal at Cannæ, 49.

Arrogated to themselves the government of the world, 305.

Had not much delicacy of sentiment with respect to friendship, 314.

Rooks, their polity, &c. 254.

ROUSSEAU, the probable occasion of his paradoxes and misfortunes, 109.

S.

Science, cultivated with advantage, in the busy scenes of active life, 190.

SCIPIO, AFRICANUS, reprehensible for the destruction of the Numantines, 304.

Secresy considered, 75.

Serjeant, *British*, innocent stratagem of, 22.

Sheep, a knowledge of their natural history useful to the poet, 258.

SHUCKBURGH, Sir GEORGE, his account of the mole in Switzerland, 249.

Smock, sometimes a pleasing object, 260.

Snow, the cause of its fertilising quality mistaken by the poets, 230.

SPANIARDS, instance of their public faith and commercial honour, 58. The absurdity of their pretensions to the dominion of the new world, 307.

STEELE, Sir RICHARD, account of the publication of his *Christian Hero*, 180.

Stratagems considered, 51, 52, 53.

SULLY, Duke, his remarkable account of Servin, 326.

Superstitions,

I N D E X.

- Superstition*, gamesters and sailors prone to it, 175.
Swan, Milton's description of it, 253.
SWIFT, the influence of particular associations on his mind, 137.
 His ludicrous reflections on the illness of Arbuthnot, 152.
 His shameful ridicule on Mr. Boyle, 155.
Swords, flaming, 264.

T.

- TASTE FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE, 201.
THEMISTOCLES, story of, 56. His false idea of friendship, 310.
THOMSON, his geographical mistake in the hymn, annexed
 to the seasons, 236.
Toleration, objections to the term, 98.
Truth, Socratic discourse concerning, 1. Moral, defined, 5.
TURENNE, Viscount, story of, 28.

V.

- Valour*, reason of the false estimates concerning it, 321.
Veracity, when incompatible with higher duties, 15.
ULLOA, Don, account of his station on the top of Cotopaxi,
 in Peru, 247.
Vows, when not binding, 15. Their true nature and obligation,
 300.

W.

- WATTS, Dr. account of, 186.
WHANG-TO, 6.
WHISTON, Mr. his credulity, 177.
WINCKELMANN'S false criticism concerning Milton, 253.
Witness, false, in favour of another, unjustifiable, 20.

Y.

- YOUNG, Dr. the melancholy cast of his mind, how acquired, 141.

